TWO GREAT THRILLING STORIES BEGIN IN THIS ISSUE OF THE LEDGER: "THE MYSTERIOUS COUSIN" AND "CANOEMATES IN CANADA." READ THEM

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The Mysterious Cousin;

Or, The Tragedy of a Night

By J. M. Merrill

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CHAPTER I.

THE big house on Cinnamon Branch was alight from cellar to roof.

Sounds of merriment issued from the open doors and windows, a party of merrymakers evidently having taken full possession of the same.

"What's going on here?"

The speaker was one of twain who had driven up to the front of the mansion in a top buggy. One was a female, veiled and slender. The driver, an ordinary countryman, leaned toward a girl, who stood next the white iron gate before the entrance to the house.

"You seem to be having some sort of doings," continued the man, as no reply to his query seemed forthcoming.

"Yes, a party," said the girl at the gate.

"A weddin', mebbe?"

"Oh, no, only a birthday gathering." The girl was plainly annoyed and would have returned inside, had not a feminine voice called to her.

"This is Pine Hill, is it not?"

"Pine Tree Hill," assented the girl.

"The home of Lettice Lake?"

"Why, yes, to be sure," and the girl laughed surprisedly. "I am Lettice, and you are——"

"Your cousin, Florence Iderman." With a merry laugh the female occupant of the vehicle slipped to the ground, threw aside her veil and passed quickly to the side of Miss Lake. The two girls exchanged kisses, as a matter of course, and began a lively chatter as they turned to enter the house.

"I will send Jim to put out your horses," Miss Lake called from the front steps. Then she led her visitor into a side room, free from the throng of revelers.

"You are tired, I know Florence. You shan't go in among 'em at all if you don't like. I had no idea you would come so soon. Let me see," musingly, "it was not till Christmas, I believe, that you thought of leaving your California home."

"True enough, Lettice, but circumstances altered my plans. I trust I am no less welcome because of the change? You see——"

"That's all right, cousin mine," broke forth Miss Lake, whose unconventional manners quite pleased the visitor. "You are welcome to Pine Tree Hill, as welcome as sunshine on New Year's Day. But say, you don't look at all as I expected you would."

"Is that so? In what respect am I different from the picture you have conjured regarding your wild Western cousin?"

"Oh, you are different, that's all," and Lettice Lake laughed lightly.

"In what respect, pray?"

"Oh, in a good many. You know I have always pictured a chubby, golden-haired maiden, while now here you are as dark as a gipsy, with a slender figure, and—and—and, well, what shall I say? An air that seems entirely foreign to anything I should ever have suspected of the Idermans. It's all right, though, and we shall get on famously together. I am quite sure of that."

Lettice removed her friend's hat and coat, and hugged her good and hard.

"Ah, ah," breathed the older girl, returning her cousin's kisses rather coyly. "I am tired, coz, and would like to be alone till I can clean up a bit and refresh the inner man—or woman, as the case may be."

"How thoughtless of me," and Lettice bounded to her feet.

Ten minutes later Miss Iderman sat alone in a neat room under the eaves of Pine Tree Hill. She had removed all travel stains and sat now regarding her dark face in the dresser mirror, a faint, rather sneering smile parting her full lips.

"I shall have the time of my life here," muttered the lips. "There'll come consternation and suffering to this proud old family, but let it come, I shall ride out the storm, and then——"

A little tap at her door cut short the soliloquy.

A second later Lettice entered, bearing a tray loaded with good things to eat. Florence laughed her surprise and approval. The two girls sat down and discussed the viands between them.

"Why didn't you send the maid with the things, Lettice?"

"That would be asking too much of the poor, overworked dear. This party has overburdened Marie with work. Mamma, you know, hasn't the gift of turning off work of any kind; fact is, she is an invalid of ten years' standing. As for me, I can do anything. Isn't it lovely, you're coming to us just at this time? You will make us a long visit, I am sure."

"Long enough to make you twice glad, Lettice."

"Now, please don't," remonstrated Miss Lake. "I've been very lonely sometimes because I had no girl chum; you shall be that chum, and we'll have the time of times the rest of the summer. Volney'll be glad to know you, I feel sure."

"Volney?"

The black eyes of Florence asked a question. Blushing prettily Lettice vouchsafed the information that Volney was a gentleman friend of the Lake family.

"And a particular friend of Miss Lettice Lake," laughingly returned the pretty Californian. "Now, mark me, I shall try my best to cut you out with this Mr. Volney Gregerson."

"Ah, ha, then you know his name? Who told you, Miss Impertinence?"

"Who but a small bird flying over the house, my dear."

Lettice may have been slightly vexed, but she smoothed off everything with the gayest of laughs. After the meal Florence signified her willingness to go down and be introduced. Lettice fluttered happily. With the air of a queen she went through that next hour of presentations and chatty small talk. As it happened Volney Gregerson was not present and the Californian must needs await another occasion for an introduction.

"I wonder why papa doesn't come?"

There was a touch of anxiety in the voice of Lettice as she uttered the words. "You see," she said, by way of explaining to her cousin, "papa drove to Gardenfield this morning, promising to be home again against dark. He hasn't come and it is now almost midnight. What do you suppose is keeping him?"

"I am sure I could not guess," returned Florence. "The roads are perfectly safe, aren't they?"

"Why, yes. You drove over a part of one from the station."

"And your father had no large sum of money to tempt the robbers?"

The two girls stood in the conservatory, where they were free from interruption. Lettice shrank slightly at the other's suggestion of robbers.

"You frighten me, Florence," said she with a sudden huskiness of voice. "Papa expected to bring back a large sum of money; it was to pay off some contractors. But nobody would know of that."

"One can never tell," said Florence.

"Oh, dear, what a cold comforter you are, Florence."

"Forget what I said. Your dear dad is all right. Shall we go in? Perhaps Volney has returned to claim that dance."

The two girls returned to the ballroom. Lettice glanced keenly about. A tall, rather prepossessing young man came to them. Lettice walked off on his arm, first, however, introducing her cousin to Mr. Huddlestone.

The fair Californian watched them as the two trod the airy mazes of a waltz together. Huddlestone's dark head, bent now and again toward that of his blonde partner, a direct contrast to the pretty Lettice's golden locks.

"I'd like to meet Volney now," muttered Florence, a strange light dancing in her dark eyes. "If he was never jealous before, he should be made to chew the quid of yellow misery to its dregs!" A hand touched her arm, a pair of rather eloquent gray eyes peering at her from above.

"Beg pardon, miss," said the six-foot Adonis, "but have you seen Stormer anywhere about?"

"Stormer?" The girl started at sound of the stranger's voice. She lifted a pair of questioning eyes to a strong, yet manly face, one that was to haunt her for a long time to come.

"Ellsworth Stormer," he explained. "Mr. Lake's bookkeeper. I wish to speak with him at once."

"I—I haven't the pleasure of his acquaintance," declared Miss Iderman, her voice trembling slightly. "I have not met the gentleman——"

"Ah, begging pardon again. I see, you are a stranger here; yet your face doesn't seem unfamiliar. Perhaps I have met you somewhere before now. I am Volney Gregerson; you may have heard of me?"

"Yes, indeed, Mr. Gregerson," and Florence, flushing deeply, put out her slim hand. "I am Miss Lake's cousin Florence."

"What? The California cousin! Well, indeed! I am very happy to meet you, Miss Iderman. Are you enjoying yourself this evening?"

"Ever so much, sir, thank you."

The two stood chatting for a minute, the eyes of both watching the dancers, and more especially the couple at the left of the circle at the far end of the room—Lettice and Huddlestone.

"I must go," finally said Gregerson. "I wish to find the bookkeeper."

"Is the finding of him of such great moment?"

"Well, it may be. You see, we are greatly worried about Mr. Lake. His bookkeeper may know something. I understand that the lumberman left Gardenfield ten hours ago. It is strange that he is so very long on the road. Ah, I hear wheels now; he has come at last. Kindly excuse me, Miss Iderman."

The tall young Adonis retired gracefully. He went directly to the outside door, where he was met by a man, who said: "The old man has come at last."

"I thought so," returned Gregerson, pushing outside. He noticed a strange action on the part of the big grays. They had halted some distance from the gate, and the off one hung his head dejectedly. Puzzled, the young man made his way to the side of the buckboard, Mr. Lake's favorite vehicle when driving over muddy roads.

There he was, huddled at one side, his coat open, his hat gone and his head fallen across the back of the seat, his long gray hair streaming over the cushions.

"Mr. Lake," called Gregerson, who was now thoroughly alarmed. He shook the old man without eliciting any response. A man hastened to the side of Volney.

"Something is wrong, eh?"

"I fear so. The old gentleman is ill, insensible. Go, Tom, for a doctor. Stay a moment. Help me to carry him into his office."

This "office" was a small room partitioned off from the main hall of Pine Tree Hill house, the private den of the wealthy lumberman. Into this the two men carried their insensible burden. Placing him on a lounge, Gregerson touched an electric button and soon had the office ablaze with light.

"Go at once for old Doc Cambrage, Tom," ordered the young man, after which he began a work of resuscitation. Soon he ceased his efforts with a groan of despair. Gregerson came to his feet and stood regarding the pallid face of old Mr. Lake commiseratingly.

"No use, the man is dead!" he ejaculated. A step sounded as the door swung on its hinges. There before him, white of face and quivering in every limb, stood Lettice Lake, the dead man's daughter.

CHAPTER II.

Gregerson essayed to speak, but words failed him.

With a faint groan, the girl tottered forward and sank on her knees beside the couch. Volney stood back, his throat full to bursting. The old lumberman was dead and he had not the heart to attempt sympathizing with the girl. The two—Lake and his daughter—had been very good comrades through all these later years, and the young man knew that Lettice would take his sudden death very much to heart.

If he had looked for anything bordering on the hysterical, he was agreeably disappointed.

"Papa, papa, speak to me—it is Lettice, your own Lettice!" welled to his ears, then followed low sobbing. Still Gregerson stood back, awed and silent. A light step pattered outside; again the door opened to admit a visitor. A dark, thin, rather pretty face was raised in inquiry to the gaze of the young man.

"Mr. Lake is dead?" she asked in a husky voice. Gregerson nodded without speaking. The visitor's dark eyes took into their depths a look that puzzled Volney—a shade of horror and sympathy that was perhaps natural, yet which struck the onlooker with a keen, misunderstood pain.

No one had yet come, and the dance went on. They did not know how the master had come home. It was the merest accident that had fetched Lettice to her dead father's side, and Florence, missing her, had quickly followed.

One minute later the tall, dark Miss Iderman led her cousin unresisting from the place. Lettice was weeping convulsively as she passed Volney. That young man laid a gentle hand on the broken-hearted girl's arm, saying softly:

"Bear up, dear child. For your mother's sake you must be brave."

Ten minutes passed. Still no one entered. Gregerson closed the door and turned his attention to the dead man on the lounge. A brief examination caused him to utter a low ejaculation of surprise. He had thought death due to apoplexy, but now he knew better.

As Gregerson arose from his brief examination, his face white and drawn with a strange uncanny feeling, the door was pushed gently open, and some one entered. The young man turned facing the visitor—Florence Iderman.

"Hasn't the doctor come?" she asked in a hushed voice.

"No."

"Nor would his coming avail?"

"Not in the least, the man is dead."

The girl crossed the floor and stood looking down into the white face of her uncle, whom she had never seen in life, at least not since she was a little child. Volney watched her countenance keenly. It was a thin, dark face, quite unreadable in its handsome outlines. Presently the girl turned toward him, a flutter of the eyelids seeming to strive against tears.

"Poor uncle!" she said. "Do you think he was murdered?"

"Murdered!" he uttered, starting as if stung. His hand clutched an object tightly and fell to an inner pocket. "Why should you suggest such a thing, Miss Iderman? I am sure that such a thought never entered my head. At least not till a moment ago."

"And a moment ago?"

Her witching black eyes appealed for an answer. He smiled grimly and advanced to her side.

"I shall first await the doctor's decision before I express an opinion," said he with singular calmness. "The house is silent, and I hear people departing. The ball is breaking up at last."

"Yes. They have been informed of this tragedy and are going. It gives me the shudders to think of all this gayety at such a time as this. I—I think I will go back to Lettice."

When she essayed to leave the place she stumbled and would have fallen had not Gregerson caught her arm. She sank weakly against his breast, her dark face nestling against his heart. A thrill undefinable went over him as for one brief instant he held the slender young Californian in his arms.

She struggled up a minute later, blushing like a schoolgirl, and with a swift glance into his eyes darted like a swallow from the place.

Gregerson stood in a sort of trance for several minutes after the girl's departure. Something like an electric flash went through him, even to the ends of his fingers and toes. He realized the magnetic power of an opposite nature in a way that was most startling.

The doctor came then, together with Minwaring, the superintendent of the booms, who happened to be passing. Gregerson closed and locked the door.

He had something to communicate that it was not necessary to tell to everybody. Gregerson, however, awaited Doctor Cambrage's decision before he broke silence.

After a hasty examination, the doctor said:

"He has been dead some hours; my services are no longer needed."

Minwaring stood, grim-featured, with folded arms, watching the doctor.

"Anybody could tell that," said the superintendent of booms. "What we want to know is the cause of death, Doctor Cambrage."

"The case is not quite plain," returned the physician, biting his lip. "I understand that he had a weak heart——"

"Who told that lie?" burst forth Minwaring in anger. "There was never a stronger man for his age than Gideon Lake. He never died of heart trouble—tell that to the marines!"

The bluff superintendent exhibited considerable emotion. The doctor bent again over the dead. He was plainly puzzled, and Gregerson, who possessed the key to the situation, made no effort to explain.

"It may have been apoplexy," finally drawled Doctor Cambrage, "and yet it is not like that either. I shall have to call a council——"

"No need of that," spoke Gregerson. "Mr. Lake was murdered, and here is the thing that found his life."

The speaker held out his hand, palm open and up, near the center of which rested a small half-round bit of steel. The glittering object was scarcely larger than a darning needle and fully as neatly polished.

"Where did you get that?" from Doctor Cambrage.

"I found it imbedded in the brain of Gideon Lake."

Instantly great interest was manifested. Minwaring said little, although his brows contracted and his breast rose and fell with a half-subdued emotion. He took the steel in his big hand, rolling it over and over with the nail of his dexter finger.

"And ye say that killed the boss?" he articulated as if to himself.

"Well, it was buried in his neck at the base of the brain," said Gregerson. "It was by the merest chance that I discovered it. I was thrusting my hand under his head to raise him to a better position when my fingers felt the point of a hard substance. I at once investigated, with the result you see."

"And that little contrivance was jabbed into the poor man's neck," muttered Minwaring. "Show me where."

Gregerson did as requested, revealing the least bit of a puncture where the brain's base sets upon the column of the neck. Doctor Cambrage expressed surprise and consternation.

"A most cunning assassination!" he ejaculated.

"The old boss was fetching home a lot of money," said the superintendent.

"He was killed for the money, no doubt."

"That is an infernal contrivance."

Gregerson again took possession of the bit of steel. For several tense minutes the three men stood conversing in low tones about the couch of death. Gregerson, tall and self-centered, was easily the master mind. His handsome face wore the stern resolution of a trial judge. Minwaring, short, stout and florid, with a tremendous depth of chest, a face with a bulldog contour, was as stern and angry as Jove's lightning. The doctor, thin and slender and old, with narrow face, furrowed cheeks and white hair, seemed the patriarch of the little gathering sitting in judgment.

"This must be thoroughly investigated," declared Doctor Cambrage.

"Certainly," agreed Gregerson, "but I trust you will let me manage it, gentlemen."

"I am willing, Volney. We can trust you." The speaker, genial old Doctor Cambrage, knew of the deep interest this young fellow had in Gideon Lake's affairs. It was quite generally known that he was to marry the daughter when the time was ripe; there was no secrecy on that score.

Big, heavy-featured Minwaring demurred, however.

"This is no man's pet case," he declared. "The boss is dead, killed by a cunning scoundrel, and I shall turn the hunting of the killer over to no man. I can put my finger on the assassin, and I mean to do it, too."

The speaker's two companions regarded him with complete surprise.

"Since you are so sure, perhaps you had better proceed at once," remarked Doctor Cambrage, picking up his pill-bag and crossing to the door.

"That's what I mean to do," grunted the superintendent. "We'll search his house, and mayhap find the stolen money."

"By Jove, tell us who he is," and the doctor turned abruptly and stared hard at the speaker.

"I might, but it will be better to keep in the shadow for a spell. Trust me to move when the trap is ready to be sprung, Doc Cambrage."

"Oh, well," with a sniff of disgust, "you two settle it to please yourselves. I have a patient waiting, so shall have to bid you good night."

Gregerson unlocked the door, permitting Doctor Cambrage to pass out. The two left behind remained in consultation for some time. Minwaring agreed to look after funeral arrangements, while the other was to comfort and render what aid the immediate family of the deceased might require during the trying hours to come.

"No," said Gregerson, when the superintendent asked for the custody of the bit of murderous steel, "I prefer not to part with

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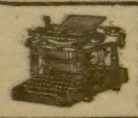

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that. It is surely going to hang somebody, and I will know where it is if I keep it myself."

"Just as you like, boy," finally growled Minwaring. "It would be more sensible for me to handle that death-dagger, since I know the chap that's got the machine what works the infernal instrument of murder."

"Who is he, Karl?" asked Gregerson.

"It might be old Huddlestone, and then again it mightn't," chuckled the burly superintendent with a shrug of his thick shoulders.

"I should say it mightn't be him," returned Gregerson disgustedly.

"And why not, pray?"

"Huddlestone isn't a man of that stamp," quickly rejoined Volney.

"You think so?"

"Sure. Why should a rich old moneylender murder his friend and neighbor in order to clutch a few paltry dollars? The idea is preposterous."

Lights were out in the main hall of the big house. At a side window glowed a spark where the widow and fatherless crouched, nursing the agony of their terrible bereavement. Volney felt for Lettice most deeply, yet he knew it would be merciful to not intrude on her privacy at an hour like this. He sent two men to watch with the dead, while he himself walked along with Karl Minwaring, discussing the tragedy.

"There's Don," suggested Minwaring. "He might do a deed like this."

"But he did not, so please leave the Huddlestones out, Karl."

"Very good," growled the superintendent. "You go your way and I'll go mine. When I fasten this murder upon one or the other of these men you will be ready to ask old Karl's pardon. Good night to you," and the old man turned and left Gregerson abruptly.

CHAPTER III.

One month after the funeral Volney encountered Don Huddlestone coming from the direction of Pine Tree Hill. A frown mantled the brow of the young prospector, and he passed the other with a bleak little nod.

Don turned and gazed after the other, who was making long strides toward the home of the Lakes.

"You are putting on airs, Mr. Gregerson," muttered he. "I imagine you think you are the whole cheese where Miss Lake is concerned. We shall see what we shall see before long. My invention is coming on, and if nothing happens I shall soon be the richest man in Basshawk Valley."

It was a summery day, with just enough chill to the atmosphere to make the feel of it exhilarating. Gregerson had been absent for a fortnight looking over some pine lands he thought of purchasing. He was feeling his way with confident hopes. As a land-cruiser he had won the confidence of some of the wealthiest firms in the Saginaws. He was even now prospecting for them, with a view, of course, to feathering his own nest where an honorable chance presented itself.

Lettice was still very much absorbed with her grief when Gregerson went away. He hoped to find her more resigned to the situation. As yet there were only four persons in the world who knew that Lake had met with foul play. This, even though it had been surmised by some that the old lumberman had been robbed, since he had, on the day of his death, drawn ten thousand dollars from the bank at Gardenfield, and when he returned, dead, to Pine Tree Hill pocketbook and money were missing.

A vision of feminine loveliness came down the walk as Gregerson approached the big house. This proved to be Florence Iderman, who, it seemed, was still a resident at Pine Tree Hill.

Her willowy form and gliding movements were graceful in the extreme. Her curling black hair fluttered from confinement in delicious abandon, shadowing the thin, dark face, giving an oriental beauty to every outline.

Gowned in some crimson stuff that clung to her form with glove-like simplicity, Miss Iderman was indeed a picture worth studying.

"Glad to see you back, Mr. Gregerson," said the girl as she opened the iron gate and held out her slim hand. "You met a gentleman going from here, did you not?"

"I saw Don Huddlestone."

"He's the one. He has been riding with Cousin Lettice. He calls here often, and I am glad of it for one thing."

"Well?"

"His presence seems to drive away thoughts of her father. It's been dull enough since you went away. I trust you will remain for a time for the sake of all of us."

"No doubt you find it dull here; in the village there is something to entertain one at this season. I understand that several parties from Chicago are camping on the lake."

"Yes, but what benefit is that to poor me?"

Florence raised her dark eyes to his face, a slight moisture in their depths. Her hand rested lightly against his sleeve, and she was leaning forward with her dark locks almost touching his cheek. It was quite a comfortable position, and the young man was very much impressed with his fiancee's pretty cousin, whose tropical beauty had not so deeply impressed him till now.

"Ah, there is Cousin Lettice now!" suddenly cried Miss Iderman, at the same time waving her hand toward a dark-gowned, slender figure coming through the maple grove toward the house. The young mistress of Pine Tree Hill came rapidly forward and held out both hands to her returned lover.

Florence left them with a discreet little apology.

Lettice and Gregerson went out to a low overturned stump, the roots of which formed a natural back to a rustic seat, and sat down.

The cousins were in direct contrast physically as well as mentally. Lettice was slender, yet not with that serpent-like slenderness that marked the other, and her small golden head fell at least two inches below the dark-thatched dome of the fair Californian.

Tall and stalwart himself, Gregerson liked small women. He was the oak, Lettice the clinging vine. There was no more charming girl along the Basshawk River than Miss Lake. Her exquisite rose-leaf complexion, rounded arms and graceful contour of limb were the envy of all the marriageable maids the country round.

Lettice was rather pale toady, and her pink fingers plucked nervously at the fringe of lace at her throat.

"How are things progressing?" queried he after a moment of small talk.

"That is what I am unable to find out," and the girl turned an anxious face up to her companion's gaze. "Minwaring is so secretive—he tells me nothing."

"Perhaps he confides in your mother?" suggested Gregerson.

"I am sure he does not. I am a poor hand in business affairs. Maybe Karl thinks of me only as a child; he acts that way at times, and it bothers me a great deal. I am glad you have come; you can see what is doing, and protect our interests, mamma's and mine."

"Certainly," he said with a smile of kindly reassurance. "I know old Karl. He means well, and his sturdy manhood and keen friendliness for your father brought him the administratorship of the estate. Has he told you nothing, you or your mother?"

"Only that the business affairs are tangled up, and that it will take a long time to straighten them out."

Lettice dropped her pink hands into her lap and sighed deeply. She sat very close to her companion, however, and rested a confiding head against his big shoulder. "Don was over today."

"Ah, Don Huddlestone! I met him as I came up the road."

"Did you? I don't know what to make of him, Volney."

The girl's blue eyes were upcast once more, her small face flushing a deep red. "He was here a long time, talking with mother."

"What was his errand? Your mother——"

"Would tell me nothing."

"But you? He talked with you?"

"Oh, yes. We rode over to Giant Rollway together. I was so tired and ill I imagined the ride would do me good. Tell me you do not care, Volney."

The little quiver in her voice quite disarmed all animosity.

"Why should I care?" he said quickly. "If it pleased you to go with Mr. Huddlestone, I have no right to growl."

"Oh, but now you are angry." Tears stood trembling on the golden lashes.

"What did he talk about, pet? Dare you tell me that?"

The speaker's face wore a smile, which quite reassured the girl.

"A lot of things; he was quite enthusiastic over a machine he was making, something that was soon to startle the world. He's an inventor, Volney, and has great hopes of becoming famous. Isn't it odd that old Tim Huddlestone should have such a relative. Don is Tim's nephew, you know."

"I have so understood," assented the prospector.

"There was one thing he said that hurt me, Volney."

"What was it, pet? If he has been insolent I will call him to account."

"No, no, not that. It was about papa."

"Yes, something about your late father?"

She leaned a little closer and clasped her lover's arm tightly while a little gasp for breath broke over her ruddy young lips.

"We all thought it was apoplexy that took him off; and now, now—oh, how can I, how dare I, tell you the awful truth?"

An inkling of the truth flashed upon the brain of Gregerson. He waited calmly for her to explain, as he knew she meant to do in time.

"It is too awful to think of," she murmured, a half-sob breaking her words into fragments. "Why should anybody wish to harm poor papa? He—he never had an enemy; not even the bookkeeper, who went away last month without getting his full pay as he thought. And some one murdered papa!"

Sobs choked further utterance. Gregerson held her very close and permitted her emotion to waste itself ere he broke into speech. He was somewhat startled himself. Which one of the two had been talking—Doctor Cambrage or Karl Minwaring? None other knew the truth.

"Was it this Don talked about, Lettice?" finally asked the land-cruiser.

"Yes, it was of murder—papa was slain and robbed!"

"And Don Huddlestone told you that?"

"Yes, he told me that. Is it true? Oh, what do you know about it, Volney?" The fair pleader clung closer to her compaion's arm and moaned like a heart-weary child.

"Calm yourself and listen to me, Lettice," said he commandingly. "Your father was foully dealt with, and there are men sworn to hunt down the guilty assassin."

A tear-wet face was suddenly lifted to his gaze, the full red lips twitching with a powerful emotion.

"If you knew this, why did you keep it from me, Volney Gregerson?"

The reproach in her voice cut him like a knife.

"It was for your good alone that I kept silent," he quickly explained. "I did not wish to harrow your mind with too many troubles. I am sorry than any man should so far forget himself as to talk with you on this subject. However, since you have been made acquainted with the truth, I will explain somewhat further, although I am not sure but that Mr. Huddlestone might be able to enter into more particulars than any one else. The murderer is not known. Did

(Continued on page fifteen.)

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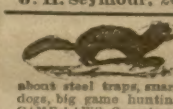

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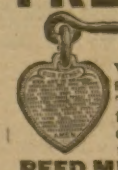

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A Loveless Bridal;

Or, The Plot Against Marcella

By Captain Douglas Lyon

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CHAPTER VIII.

MARCELLA CASTS THE DIE.

MEANTIME, in the rosy light of that same morning, Marcella Steele stood facing her aunt in the sumptuous parlor of the house in Lovelit place.

She had been summoned into the presence of Mrs. Stanley at an hour when her eyes should have been closed in slumber, after the exciting scenes through which she had passed.

Marcella found her aunt dressed in a rich morning gown and crushed into the plush-covered chair at her table. The beautiful girl scented danger the moment she crossed the threshold, for it leaped from the eyes that regarded her, and was revealed in the pursed lips, a trifle paler than usual.

"I was not aware that you had clandestine meetings," said Mrs. Stanley, looking at Marcella with all eyes.

The young woman started.

"I shall have Jacob cut the vine down. And a young lady on the eve of her wedding, too!"

Deeper grew the crimson on Marcella's cheeks. Then, as swiftly as it had come into being, it vanished, and pallor took its place.

"Your looks betray you. A denial is unnecessary," continued madam.

Marcella moved closer, till she was almost at the chair, and in a position from which she could look into the proud, accusing face upturned for her inspection.

"You have spies at your call," she said with cutting bitterness.

"I promised your father that I would ever be the guardian of your welfare."

"And that is your way of carrying out the promise?"

"Never mind how I carry out my promises," was the reply. "Who came up the vines last night?"

Marcella did not speak.

"Girl," resumed madam, "the sooner you are under restraint by law the better. You will prepare for the ceremony. It will take place tonight."

"Aunt——"

"No argument," broke in the stern woman. "You cast the die last night. By this time tomorrow you will have a guardian who will look after your welfare, clothed with the rights of a husband."

"I do not deny that I had a visitor last night!" exclaimed the young girl. "He was not of my seeking. Of that I can give you my solemn word."

"No?"

"He came of his own accord and there was nothing criminal in his visit. He did not set foot in my room."

"You were not aware of his coming?"

"To my recollection I never saw him till last night."

"It's a pretty story," smiled Mrs. Stanley. "It would look well in a novel, but——"

"He came as one who knew my father," and then, as if she had gone too far, Marcella stopped abruptly and remained silent.

"As one who knew your father?" echoed Mrs. Stanley. "Pray who was he?"

"He called himself Jasper Chipps."

"Oh!" and the woman's voice was couched in a different key. "Why should he seek you at midnight, pray?"

"It is my secret," said Marcella, stubbornly and in a manner which told her relative that she could not be made to reveal more. "What passed between Jasper Chipps and myself shall remain unsaid."

"You refuse to inform me, your aunt and guardian?"

"I positively refuse."

"Remember, girl, that I have the power to beggar you."

"I may be a beggar already," was the reply.

"You are not a beggar," and a smile wreathed the lips of the speaker. "The will nominates your legacy."

"I have never seen the will, save the terrible item which you have read to me."

"Sit down."

There was now a sympathetic tone in Mrs. Stanley's voice, and her look seemed to soften. Marcella obeyed, taking the chair opposite her aunt.

"There is much in the will for you, girl," said she. "For reasons best known to me it has been kept secret. When you marry after my wishes you become one of the richest heiresses in the city."

"And if I refuse——"

"I can send you into the world a beggar."

A flash of resentment lit up the lustrous eyes of Marcella.

She made an effort as if to rise, but the jeweled hand of her aunt, darting forward like a serpent, encircled her wrist.

"No, remain," said she. "There is no escape for you. You are to become the bride of Ramon Doan."

"I have told you that I entertain for him not the least semblance of respect."

"I care not for that," was the retort. "Love does not always go with the modern marriages. In fact, it is not essential any more. As Mrs. Doan, you will have the entree of the Four Hundred; as Ramon's wife, you will be the envied of the fashionable circles——"

"And be the most wretched creature in the world!"

To this exclamation Mrs. Stanley essayed no response.

"I have called you here to tell you that everything is arranged. In this house, at ten o'clock tonight, you will take upon yourself the vows of wifehood."

"Without my consent?"

"By my command and the terms of the will."

Marcella drew back and rose slowly to her feet. Her superb figure was drawn to its full height, and her face, white now as the driven snow on Alpine peaks, was tensely drawn.

Had Mrs. Stanley glanced downward she would have seen that the girl's hands were tightly clinched, the pink nails almost cutting the delicate skin of the palms.

"Show me the will!" said Marcella through compressed lips.

"After the ceremony, dear."

"Prove to me that it is my father's will," she went on.

"The signatures prove that."

"The man said——"

Marcella stopped and let the remainder of the sentence die unspoken.

"What did the night intruder say?" demanded Mrs. Stanley. "What lies did he pour into your soul?"

"No, I promised that I would keep the secret," replied Marcella.

"The falsehood, you mean?"

A proud, defiant light came into the girl's eyes, and she broke from her tether, retreating half-way across the room, where she halted and looked at the woman in the chair.

"It is almost death to disobey," cried Mrs. Stanley. "It is in one respect worse than death. I can send you out into the world with a brand of infamy on your brow."

"Aunt——"

"I can turn the world against you. In this marriage, and in it alone, is there safety and a good name."

"For the love of Heaven and the peace of my soul——"

"Silence!" interrupted the woman, and in her voice there was no trace of pity. "Who will believe that Jasper Chipps, as you call him, came to you unbidden? Who will believe you when he was seen at your window with your own face close to his? What will the world say of the daughter of Donald Steele——"

Marcella clasped her hands and gazed stonily into the hard face before her.

"It is false! I did not send for him. He came unbidden, as I hope for Heaven and its bliss. He——"

"But make the world believe it!" interrupted Mrs. Stanley. "Go out into society and tell your story to it. Then let the police bring forward this man Chipps, ex-prison bird, libertine——"

Marcella threw out her hands and recoiled. She would shut out the words that fell from the colorless lips of the woman who had her in the toils of fate.

"You don't like to hear of it?" hissed madam. "You wouldn't stand a moment in the flame of criticism. You would be withered in an instant and cast aside in your youth and beauty. What would your word weigh against the reputation of this wretch Chipps? At your window at midnight when the household slept, his face pressed close to yours."

"Have you no heart, no mercy?" and Marcella clutched the arm of her relative. "Are you a woman——"

"I am your father's sister," was the interruption. "I would save you from disgrace. I would make you a wife in more than name. You must choose now between this man Chipps and Ramon Doan."

"But I love neither," said Marcella. "Jasper Chipps came to me with the purest motives, Ramon Doan does not."

"Very well," coolly said Mrs. Stanley. "What is your decision? Will you become Ramon Doan's wife at ten o'clock tonight, or go out into the world with a brand upon your brow?"

A spasm of fear that shook her from head to foot, passed through every fiber of Marcella's frame. Her face, if possible, lost every semblance of color, and her voice rang through the room like the cry of the lost.

"I will become Ramon Doan's wife!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE GAME TWO PLAYED AT.

Ramon Doan came out of the elegant home of the Crescent Club, after his interview with Doctor Judas, with the palest of faces.

The little doctor walked in another direction with a satisfied smile which told of victory.

The latter went direct to his own office where he locked the door and proceeded to make merry.

"It was a cool, bold play," he ejaculated. "But count on Doctor Judas for just such a thing at the right time. Let me see: Madam Leo has the potion for which she has paid like a princess, and I have Mr. Doan right in my hands. Ha, ha! One must make hay while the sun shines, and the sun is shining for me just now."

So pleased was he with what he had done that he reached across the table and selected a prime Havana from an elaborate box, after which he lit it and began to walk the floor with congratulatory mien.

He was in the midst of a happy reverie when there came a rap on his door and he crossed the room to it.

Doctor Judas opened the portal to come face to face with Gilbert Montclare.

Evidently Montclare was the last man the toxicologist expected at that particular moment. He held the door ajar with an interrogation in his eyes, while he tried by some process best known to himself to penetrate Montclare's thoughts.

Gilbert walked in and took a chair.

"My name is Montclare," said he to the waiting doctor.

"Not an unfamiliar name," was the reply. "You're the man who had a little altercation with a friend."

"I have no altercations with friends," observed Gilbert. "If you refer to the late episode on the street you must stand corrected, for Ramon Doan himself and of his own will has severed the chain of friendship that has existed between us."

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"I understand and am corrected," replied Doctor Judas, with an amused bow. "Such affairs are not very elevating."

Gilbert colored.

"I know. I was carried away by the actions of the fellow, but he has angered me of late by his plot against one of the fairest women in the town."

"Eh?" said the doctor, pretending that he was totally ignorant of the plot against Marcella.

"I need not explain," said Gilbert. "I have not sought you for that purpose."

"No?"

"I have called, doctor, to ask you if you were familiar with the last doings of Donald Steele, the wealthy merchant who died some years ago. You have been a resident of the city for twenty years, and were prominent in your chosen profession when Mr. Steele was at the apex of his business career."

"Back!" cried Marcella.

"I did know Donald Steele," responded Doctor Judas. "While our friendship was not of the Damon and Pythias sort, we were on good terms."

"Donald Steele left behind him a will, did he not?"

"Most men do who would see things fairly attended to after their demise."

Gilbert was constrained to bite his lip. His question had not been answered, and there was a disposition on Doctor Judas's part to avoid it.

"Have you ever seen the will left by Donald Steele?" asked Montclare.

"I must first inquire into your motives in thus catechizing me," said the doctor. "You must remember that we are total strangers to one another——"

"We will waive the matter of non-acquaintanceship," broke in Gilbert, "or at least I will. Did you or did you not see the paper said to be the last will and testament of Donald Steele?"

"You put things in a strange way," said the man of mystery and medicine. "Do you doubt the genuineness of the paper now extant as the will of Donald Steele, merchant?"

"I do!" exclaimed Montclare. "I have very serious doubts as to its genuineness."

"It has been probated."

"Yes, and a paper purporting to be the genuine will is now in the possession of Mrs. Stanley of Lovelit place."

"And Mrs. Stanley is the sister of the deceased?"

"Yes. Doctor, you have not replied to my question," and Gilbert smiled. "As the friend of Donald Steele, did you ever have access to the will which is the true one?"

"There are private matters which I cannot discuss," replied the wily doctor.

Gilbert flushed scarlet.

"You mean that, as the friend of Mrs. Leo Stanley, you will not discuss anything that might interfere with the plot she has on hand?"

"Sir?"

"I think I have used good and plain English," retorted Gilbert. "I don't see how I could be more explicit. I believe that the will which is now in Lovelit place is not the genuine one."

"You might believe that the earth is flat, but that would not alter its rotundity," sneered Doctor Judas.

"Of course not, but I am not advancing geographical fallacies," and Montclare smiled in return. "You have heard my statement. I believe that the will in Mrs. Stanley's house, the one which imposes cruel hardships upon her niece, Donald Steele's daughter, Miss Marcella, is not the genuine document."

"Have a care!" cried Doctor Judas. "You may be treading on dangerous ground."

"I am responsible for the trend of my footsteps," was the quick reply. "Jasper Chipps never witnessed a will which blights the life of the testator's child."

"And who, pray, is Jasper Chipps?"

"One of the witnesses of Donald Steele's will, not the paper which is held as a club over the head of Marcella."

Doctor Judas sprang to his feet and paced the carpet with the rage of a tiger.

"I refuse to further prolong this interview!" he exclaimed as his face, dark already, grew darker with the storm cloud which Gilbert had invoked. "I have an engagement——"

"I shall not keep you from that," was the reply. "But know, Doctor Judas, that this matter is to be sifted out to the dregs."

"Who constituted you Miss Steele's champion?"

"Ramon Doan, by his infamous campaign against the happiness of the young lady."

A sinister smile lit up the eyes of Doctor Judas as he stopped in front of his visitor.

"It's dangerous interference, I say," he exclaimed.

"No danger seen or implied shall deter me!" cried Gilbert, with rising spirits.

"Very well. The result be on your own head."

"I shall not shrink from that result be it what it may. But, my dear doctor, you have not yet told me whether the will held by Mrs. Stanley is genuine."

"Gods, man, do you think she would have a forged document of that nature?"

"Leo Stanley is quite capable of doing anything that would forward her plans," said Montclare.

"I have the honor of being her friend."

"A very doubtful honor," said Gilbert, as he rose and faced the doctor.

"Beware! Madam may have a champion as cool and persevering as any who enlists in the cause of her niece."

To these words Gilbert did not reply.

He stepped back and laid his hand on the doorknob.

At the same time Doctor Judas sprang swiftly to a shelf on one side of the room.

His hand was lifted rapidly, and the next moment a blinding light seemed to pervade the apartment.

Gilbert felt his lungs fill instantly with a suffocating gas; he threw up his hands, grasped again for the knob, but missed it half an arm's length.

He found himself falling forward, and in a trice knew no more.

When he came to himself he was seated in a large arm-chair, to the sides of which his wrists were bound with flexible wire strands, while another of the same nature held his head against the back of the chair.

The room in which he found himself was elegantly furnished. Everything about him betokened a lavish display of wealth, the carpet was thick and of a foreign pattern, while costly pictures adorned the walls.

Montclare was nonplused. It took some little time to collect his scattered senses.

Slowly he recalled the scenes of the last consciousness he had known. All came back by degrees, but surely. He must be the prisoner of Doctor Judas!

In vain did he wrench at his strange bonds.

"I must get free!" he cried. "I must get out of this trap. While I remain here the infamous plot against Marcella Steele's honor may be carried to fruition!"

CHAPTER X.

MARCELLA'S MARRIAGE.

The handsome ormolu clock on the marble mantelpiece in Mrs. Stanley's parlor had struck nine.

Madam herself entered the room as the last notes of the clock died away. She was radiantly garbed and looked pleased.

Presently the door opened and a servant appeared. Mrs. Stanley turned upon her with a question in her eyes.

"Doctor Judas," announced the young woman and vanished.

In another moment Madam faced the little man of secrets. He came forward with his old smile on his sallow face.

"Am I the first guest?" he asked, as he extended his hand to the woman.

"The very first, doctor," was the reply.

"Mr. Doan——"

"Oh, he will not be here till near the hour," broke in Madam. "It was so arranged. He will probably come with the minister."

"Miss Marcella——"

"She has submitted," was the interruption. "There will be no scene at the ceremony. I followed your directions by the help of my maid."

The eyes in the doctor's head twinkled triumphantly.

"Then indeed you need give yourself no cause for uneasiness," he responded, rubbing his soft hands unctuously. "It has cleared the way."

"I took you at your word, and am glad that the potion can be relied on."

Little did Mrs. Stanley know of Marcella's visit to her bed-chamber, as has been described, and the substitution of water for the will-destroying potion she had bought of the cunning doctor. Far from her dreams was the thought that the fluid which her maid had placed in Marcella's tea was as harmless as the water of the forest brook.

As the half-hour struck, the door of the parlor opened again.

Ramon Doan, accompanied by a clerical looking individual, made his appearance. He smiled grimly when his eyes caught sight of Doctor Judas, but a look from Mrs. Stanley reassured him.

In one of the upper rooms of the mansion in Lovelit place stood Marcella dressed in a rich habit, which became both form and feature. She was attended by her maid, Dularia.

If the brow of the beautiful girl was ghastly white her beauty lost nothing thereby, and the faithful maid, stepping back to survey her mistress, let a tear course down her cheek.

"It is too bad!" cried Dularia at last, unable to restrain her feelings longer. "I would do anything, my lady, to liberate you from this danger."

Marcella laughed strangely at these words.

"Have no fear," she said. "One must become a bride some time and why not I?"

"But the man—the man! mistress," exclaimed the girl. "You do not, cannot love him."

"There are loveless altars, my dear," was the reply.

"Alas! too many such," said the maid. "Is it too late to break this engagement?"

"The wedding will proceed."

"But I shall not witness it. It would break my heart. I'm sure if the minister knew the truth——"

"Tell him not," put in Marcella. "My gloves, Dularia."

The girl handed her mistress the gloves which lay on the couch, and in silence Marcella put them on.

"You look beautiful enough to wed a king!" exclaimed Dularia rapturously. "You would grace the finest throne in the world, my dear mistress, but they have thrown the coils about you and you have been forced into a bitter marriage."

"Be still," chided Marcella, with the least bit of sternness in her tones. "You will unnerve me, and you must know that I need my courage for the coming ordeal."

"Pardon me," cried the maid, imprinting a kiss on the marble brow of the bride-to-

(Continued on page eleven.)

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GENTLE JABS.

All men who can bottle their wrath are not corkers.

Many a man who poses as a lion is in reality only a cub.

After a man is married he never buys a hammock built for two.

It's so much easier to gossip about people than to pray for them.

Some men can't even blame cigarettes for their failure to make good.

The hay-fever victim appreciates anything that is not to be sneezed at.

All organs have stops—with the exception of feminine organs of speech.

Lot's wife probably turned around to see what another woman had on.

To a man wealth means power; to a woman the pleasure of being envied.

A babbling brook is probably so called because it can't keep its mouth shut.

In the nature of things a wedding isn't a wedding if it proceeds without a hitch.

Sometimes a man's will power is so strong that he only thinks of his swear words.

Many a man who imagines he is a born leader isn't even a successful follower.

No man can afford to buy champagne on a beer income unless he owns a brewery.

Don't boast of what you can do unless you are willing to take off your coat and make good.

Most of us are anxious to pose as reformers, but we don't want to begin at home.

Marriage may not bring a man wisdom, but it enables him to acquire a lot of experience.

Getting married is like getting drunk; it either brings out a man's best or worst qualities.

A woman seems to think her husband is to blame for everything—or if he isn't he ought to be.

If visitors knew what their hosts say of them after they are gone they would never do it again.

Anyway, the grass widow escapes the annoyance of being told what a fine man her husband was.

After writing a ten-page letter a woman proceeds to tell what she wants to say in a three-line postscript.

When a man in a small town tries to be dignified the best he can get is a reputation for having a swelled head.

It must be annoying to have so beautiful a complexion that it deceives others into believing that one makes up.

If all men were compelled to practice what they preach the majority would discontinue the preaching habit.

Many a man's wife prevents him from losing a lot of money in speculating by not allowing him any to speculate with.

An Ohio man died of blood-poisoning after being pecked by a hen. Most henpecked men, however, continue to live and suffer.

In African Jungles;

Or, A Girl's Fight for Honor.

By Colonel Alfred B. Tozer.

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CHAPTER X.

THE DISAPPEARANCE SYNDICATE.

THE president of the Cosmos Trust Company regarded Kalkenbrenner with dignity.

"This is no time for joking," he declared. "And I warn you that any attempt to conceal Bement will result to your disadvantage, and also to his!"

"He's out there in the jungle somewhere, with the man-eaters," repeated Kalkenbrenner. "I'd give a good deal myself to know where he is. He was here a moment ago, and now he's gone."

"It is very strange," growled the president of the Cosmos Trust Company, William G. Kilrain by name. "We followed him from New York without trouble. As I have before remarked, it is very strange that we should lose him here."

"If you want to know how easily a man may disappear here," replied Kalkenbrenner, grimly, "suppose you drop that torch and step out into the jungle alone. Alone? No, you won't be alone! Just listen."

Rain was beating steadily on the trees and undergrowth, and a light wind was rustling the leaves and boughs musically, but above all came the threatening roar of lions and the militant trumpetings of elephants, together with the chattering of monkeys and the call of birds disturbed by the advent of humans into their sleeping chambers. William G. Kilrain shrugged his shoulders significantly.

"If Bement is out there without protection," he said, "I reckon our pursuit ends here. He was here a moment ago?"

"Indeed he was. We were trying to catch a lion."

Then Kalkenbrenner related the details of the disappearance of Bement.

"I don't see that anything can be done," observed Kilrain, at the conclusion of the recital. "Indeed, I would suggest that we take ourselves out of the rain, if you can manage to put me up for the night."

"What I ought to do," replied Kalkenbrenner, savagely, "is to turn you out on your own resources. Why didn't you remain in Chicago and find out who stole your money instead of trailing off here after Bement? I don't believe Bement took your cash."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Kilrain. "Hear the man! Why, Bement hasn't denied taking it! Doesn't flight show that he is guilty? Besides, I haven't accused him!"

"You're too illogical to be president of a trust company," retorted Kalkenbrenner. "You repeat stale judgments like a talking machine. Bement was accused by some one, wasn't he? Well, wasn't it better for him to run away and retain his liberty than to stay and lie in jail until the thief is found? You people who live and have your being in banks and trust companies are like a lot of parrots!"

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated the president, good naturedly.

"Well," continued Kalkenbrenner, "we can't stay out here in the rain all night. I suppose we may as well go to camp and send the trackers out to beat the bush with torches. No use for us to go out. We'd only delay their work."

"You're actually going to put me up for the night?" asked Kilrain, who had taken no offense at the big man's straight talk. "I wouldn't think you'd do it, not after putting it to me like that."

"Oh," replied Kalkenbrenner, "I'm a talkative man. I say what I think and get over it. You come along with me and get the best there is in camp. I presume your carriers are in need of rest, too?"

"Yes, they've had a hard day. Who's that man coming there?" continued the president, indicating Morris, who was now approaching the party, by this time near to the camp. "It appears to me that I've seen the gentleman before."

"That," replied Kalkenbrenner, "is Morris, the diamond expert."

"Know him like a book!" cried Kilrain, rushing forward to grasp Morris' hand. "Never expected to meet with him here."

The two men walked back to camp arm-in-arm, and were lost to everything save each other's company until quite late. Then they came over and sat down by Kalkenbrenner, who had busied himself giving instructions to the natives who were beating the jungle in the hope of finding Bement.

"What luck?" Kilrain asked.

"Not a clew yet," was the discouraged reply.

"You don't suppose he saw me coming?" asked Kilrain.

"In the day time," replied Kalkenbrenner, regarding Kilrain's gaudy attire, now soaking wet, with a smile, "he might have seen you a long way off, but in the night, never. Anyway, he wouldn't have run away if he had seen you coming."

"When it comes a criticising clothing," said Kilrain, indignantly, "I don't think I've got anything over you so long as you tote that vest around with you."

Kalkenbrenner glanced down at his gaudy waistcoat, stroked it fondly with one big palm, and burst into a roar of laughter. Kilrain followed his example in regard to the laugh, and the two men shook hands and became fast friends.

"You're the second man that's been in here after Bement," said Kalkenbrenner, as the two sat smoking some excellent cigars, taken from Kilrain's stock, "and I'd like to know how you got in here. Where did you pick up the clew?"

"Why," replied Kilrain, "did you know that Bement has a sister?"

"Sure! He talks about his sister every day. I reckon they were always pretty chummy."

"Well, we got the clew from his sister."

Kalkenbrenner sprang to his feet.

"You don't mean to say," he said, "that his sister betrayed him?"

"Not intentionally."

"But it was through her that you learned where the young man went?"

"Indeed it was."

"Then it is a dirty game you've been playing."

Kilrain laughed heartily.

"Now, don't get into a passion," he said. "I don't know how else I could have got the pointers I wanted. I'll tell you here and now that Bement must go back to Chicago and clear this thing up. His flight looks like guilt, but he has his chance for acquittal, after all. If he didn't do it, who did?"

"You've associated with detectives until you've learned their lingo. I can't tell you who did, and I don't think Bement can. Anyway, he is not going back to lie in jail while the guilty man blindfolds all you people. Who would accept his word as

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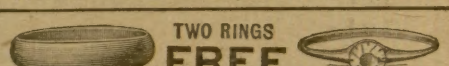

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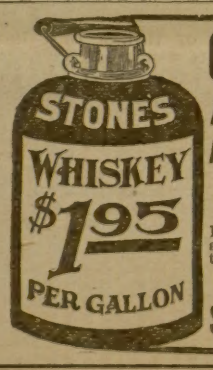

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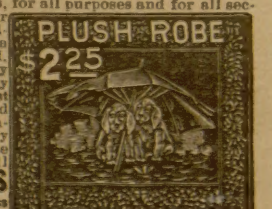

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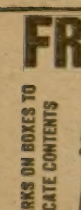

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against that of the company's men? No, sir, he is not going back just yet."

"How can you predict what he will say when I talk with him?"

"I don't think you are likely to talk with him for some time," was the reply. "I don't know where he is. Seems like the ground opened and took him down. He may be dead out there in the jungle. Indeed, I think the chances are that he is. And, even at that, his true friends will think it better than going back to Chicago and lying in jail for no one knows how long. No, you won't get a chance to talk with him for a long time to come, I'm sorry to say. But you haven't told me how you came to work this information out of his sister."

"It isn't necessary that I should," was the reply, "still, I don't mind talking with you about it. You jump at me like a hawk at a hen now and then, but I don't lay it up against you."

"It seems that Bement and his sister have long been infatuated with the Dark Continent. They knew that at the offices of the Cosmos Trust Company, for Bement would talk of Africa by the hour, and always had a book on Uganda lying about his desk.

"When he disappeared, we sent a girl detective up to nurse Miss Susan Bement, who was prostrated by the shock of her brother's disappearance. Of course this detective went as a friend. Oh, we got her introduced through a friend, all right.

"She claimed to be poor and out of a job, and offered to remain and care for Miss Bement for no pay at all until she could land in some position. She got into the affections of Miss Bement in this way and heard a lot of talk about Uganda.

"Then one day, she found a map with a line drawn around this part of the country. That map had been enclosed in the letter Bement sent to his sister the day he left Chicago. When she gave us the map, with her story, that settled it, and I made up my mind to come out in person and locate Bement.

"I don't know whether he is guilty or not. If he is not guilty another man is, and his being back will help to uncover the other fellow. I'm looking for him without prejudice. See?"

"I think," replied Kalkenbrenner, "that you're a pretty decent sort of a fellow—for a banker!"

Kilrain laughed again, with a roar that almost equaled that of Kalkenbrenner at his happiest moment, and the animal hunter took his hand and shook it heartily.

"God bless my soul!" replied Kilrain. "I'm not enough of a banker to hurt! I didn't want to be a banker. I made my money running cattle out of the Panhandle, and in buying derelict railroads and making them almost as good as new. I got mixed up in the affairs of the Cosmos Trust Company and they elected me president. Bless you, I don't have anything to say about running the company. I'm doing all this on my own hook, and at my own expense."

"I don't believe," said Kalkebrenner, "that you have any idea that Bement stole that money. Honest, now, have you?"

"Never mind what I think," was the reply. "Whether I do or not, his capture will put me wise to a lot of things that have been going on there. It was my idea to get this girl detective to watch his sister, and I got other information from her that the people at the office know nothing about."

"I wish I had that girl by the neck!" roared Kalkenbrenner.

"Oh, she thinks about as much of herself as you think of her, for doing the job," replied Kilrain. "She cried when she made her report to me, and said that she wished she had never seen me, and threw my check in my face and carried on awfully. I don't know what to make of some women."

"Where is that girl now?" asked Kalkenbrenner.

"I don't know, I'm sure. She never came near me again. I met her on the street one day and she almost hissed at me. She's with Miss Bement, in Chicago, I presume."

"Do you happen to remember," asked Kalkenbrenner, carelessly, "whether this girl is a pronounced blonde or not?"

"Decidedly so."

"Plenty of pluck?"

"I should say so."

"Would she have the nerve to come over here and try to undo the wrong she did to the Bements?"

"Oh, I don't know about that. What have you in mind now?"

Kalkenbrenner made no direct reply. He was thinking of the blonde hair, the perfect complexion, and the shining blue eyes of the girl in white, and wondering if there could be the least thing in the notion that had come to his mind.

"I'd just like to know," he said, presently, "whether the girl is in Chicago. That is all. There has been some mighty queer happenings here since we struck this country. We had a couple of mysteries on our minds before you came. A girl that disappeared in the jungle, and a letter that appeared in a mighty odd way. Now Bement has joined this disappearance syndicate. It gets me."

CHAPTER XI.

THE STRANGE ADVENTURE.

Bement certainly had joined a disappearance syndicate. It seemed to him for a few moments after leaving the boma that he had disappeared from himself! He had heard Kalkenbrenner referring to Africa as a vaudeville stage and making merry over the odd things they came upon, and now he began to think that the whole thing was a play, and that he was getting considerably mixed up in the cast.

When he passed around the west side of the boma in order to see if it was possible to get a snap-shot at the lion, he came near meeting death. The two lions that bounded into Kalkenbrenner's view came near making a meal of him. It is probable that they would have done so only for the fact that the fresh meat in the cage first attracted their attention, and the further fact that they considered it necessary to investigate the big beast who was acting so much at home in front of the boma.

As the animals bounded past him he made for the nearest tree, which was not far off, and was making good progress toward the nearest limb when he felt a strong pull at his foot. Thinking that it was the lion paying him special attention, Bement struggled to release himself, but failed to do so.

It seemed to be a human hand that was encircling his ankle. At least, it was not the jaws of a wild animal that held him, for there was no pain. Then he heard a voice. It was a native voice, but the words were English, and very good English at that.

"Come," the voice said, "we can get away if we are nimble."

Bement dropped at once to the ground. As he did so the gate fell and there was a scramble of wild animals. Then he heard Kalkenbrenner calling to him. By this time the owner of the voice had him by the arm and was leading him into the jungle.

Kalkenbrenner's voice continued to boom out into the darkness, and Bement did his best to make reply, to call for assistance, but was prevented from doing so by a sinewy hand at his throat. He endeavored to pull away, but, to his amazement, athlete though he was, found that he could not do so.

"What is the meaning of this?" he managed to ask. "Where are you taking me?"

"To safety," was the only reply.

Then he was seized by the other arm, and marched off swiftly as the tangle of undergrowth and vines would permit, still drawing back and protesting. He could hear Kalkenbrenner's voice, and the torches brought in by the trackers who came with Kilrain added to the illumination in the rear, but he could not make his plight known.

Presently his captors paused and lighted a torch, which made but a feeble showing in the heavy darkness. Bement was hoping that the light would be observed by his companions, but no sound indicating its discovery came to him. As they walked on one of his captors kept up a low, cooing, monotonous call, not unlike that of a bird communicating with its mate.

"The torch will keep off the wild animals," explained the man who had spoken to him in English, "and the signal being given will protect us from the natives."

Bement made no response to this bit of information. He was wondering if he was ever to see his friends again. He could arrive at no conclusion concerning his capture. He could not understand why he should have been selected out of the group at the camp, when any one of the others, parhaps all of them, might have been taken.

After walking for a long time, it seemed hours to the weary man, the men halted on a little knoll and lighted another torch. Then the call changed to a shriller tone, and an answer came from a thicket not far off. A light showed in the distance, glittering through a mass of rain-wet leaves, and before long moving forms could be discerned about a fire.

By this time Bement was thoroughly tired out. His clothing was soaked with rain, his legs felt like sticks, and his face was smarting from the attacks of insects. He was taken to a roughly-built hut and told to lie down and rest himself.

"Get a little sleep if you can," directed the guide.

"Sleep!" echoed Bement, savagely. "How am I to sleep, not knowing whether I am to be put into a stew within the next few hours? I'd like to know why you brought me here."

"For your own safety," replied the native.

(Continued on page ten.)

Welcome Recipe

FOR MANY MEN AND WOMEN, TOO.

This recipe can be filled at home, so that no one need know of another's troubles, as the ingredients can be obtained separately at any well stocked drug store. They are in regular use and many different prescriptions are constantly being filled with them.

This will prove a welcome bit of of information for all those who are overworked, gloomy, despondent, nervous and have trembling limbs, heart palpitation, dizziness, cold extremities, insomnia, fear without cause; timidity in venturing, and general inability to act naturally and rationally as others do, because the treatment can be prepared secretly at home and taken without any one's knowledge.

Overworked office men and the many victims of society's late hours and dissipation will, it is said, find the restorative they are in need of.

If the reader decides to try it, get three ounces of ordinary syrup sarsaparilla compound and one ounce compound fluid balmwort mix and let stand two hours; then get one ounce compound essence cardiol and one ounce tincture cadomene compound (not cardamom), mix all together, shake well and take a teaspoonful after each meal and one when retiring.

A certain well-known medical expert asserts that thousands of men and many women are sufferers all because of dormant circulation of the blood and a consequential impairment of the nervous force, which begets the most dreadful symptoms and untold misery.

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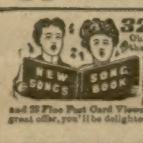

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Guest—He seems a very nice young man. What's his profession?

Hostess—He's a social botanist.

Guest—And what is that, pray?

Hostess—Oh, we invite him especially to give attention to our wallflowers.

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Enough.

He—Are you ready to live on my income?

She—Certainly, dearest, if you can get another for yourself.

Had Suffered Enough.

St. Peter—H'm! I don't know about letting you in.

New Arrival—Me? I was a clergyman.

St. Peter—I know it. But you had charge of a fashionable church at a fat salary, which you spent in the luxurious adornment of your grand residence, and you were given a long vacation and a trip to Europe every summer.

New Arrival—Y-e-s; but whenever I went to Europe I had to spend all my time traveling in the Holy Land.

St. Peter—You have suffered enough. Come in.

The Rivals.

Mrs. Tiptop—I am sorry you were not at my reception last night.

Mrs. Highup (coldly)—I received no invitation.

Mrs. Tiptop (with affected surprise)—Indeed? It must have miscarried. I had among my guests three foreign counts.

Mrs. Highup—So that is where they were? I desired to engage them last evening to wait on table at our theater-party supper, but the employment agent told me they were out.

Engaging a Servant.

Mrs. Smith was engaging a new servant, and, as is always the case, the latest applicant.

"I hope," said she, "that you had no angry words with your last mistress before leaving?"

"Oh, dear no, mum; none whatever," was the reply, with a toss of her head. "While she was having her bath, I just locked the bathroom door, took all my things, and came away as quiet as possible."

A Shrewd Old Dad.

"And you will give us your blessing?" asked the eloping bride, returning to the parental roof.

"Freely," replied the old man; "no trouble about the blessing, but board and lodging will be at regular rates."

TICKLISH

Terrifying the Bridegroom.

"Here is a telegram from Papa," says the eloping bride. "He says for us to come right home and live with him and mamma."

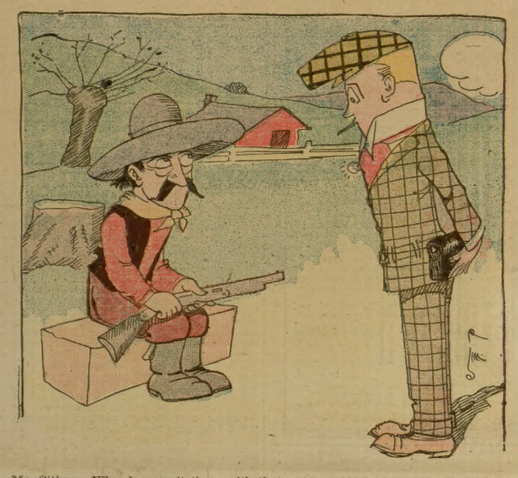
"I didn't think he would be so vindictive as all that," sighs the eloping bridegroom.

Enemies Now.

Belle—No, I don't believe in these Hallowe'en games. I glanced over my shoulder into a mirror once, and I never was so frightened in my life.

Helen—Did you see your own face, dear?

THOSE USELESS QUESTIONS.



Mr. Citiguy—Why do you sit there with that gun on your knees? Are you going to shoot something?

Hank West—Naw, stranger. I'm brushin' me teeth gettin' ready to go ter the opery. Are ye blackin' the kitchen range or takin' a leetle run in yer autymobul?

Crazy Verdict.

Bill—I see Bugge was acquitted because of insanity.

Sam—But he wasn't no more crazy than I am.

Bill—No, it was the jury that was off.

Love's Limitations.

Smart Tramp—Please, mum, folks say you sets a chair at the table fer y'r husband at every meal, yet he's been dead a year.

Widow—Yes. A medium told me if I did that his spirit would come and occupy it.

Smart Tramp—That was some time ago I guess.

Widow—Yes. Why?

Smart Tramp—'Cause a medium told me only yistiday you was very foolish to keep up that custom, 'cause y'r husband had met Queen Elizabeth, and Helen of Troy, an' Cleopatra, an'—an' Venus, in the spirit world, an' married 'em all.

Widow—The miserable brute! Come right in, and I'll give you all his clothes, and his watch, and everything the old fool left.

Only a Dentist.

"That's a fine house," said Brown to Jones, "and yet I cannot bear to look at it."

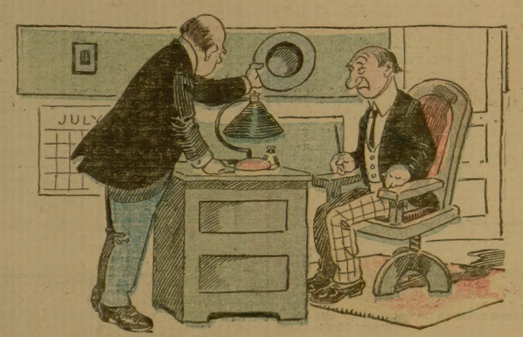
"Why not?" asked Jones.

"Why?" repeated Brown. "Because the owner built it out of the blood and the groans of his fellow men; out of the grief of children and the wails of women!"

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Jones. "The brute! What is he—a money-lender?"

"Oh, no, dear friend; he is a dentist!"

ONE PECULIARITY.



President of New Bank—Well, you see, we'll want to put coins, photographs and the like under the corner stone of our new building so that people in the ages to come may know the peculiarities and customs of the people of these times.

Director—Well, don't forget one of this year's women's hats.

Last Chance for Free Homesteads.

Yes, a few elegant free homesteads can still be had in Mexico, where many Americans are now locating. You do not even have to go to Mexico, but are required to have five acres of fruit trees planted within five years. For information printed in English regarding Mexican homesteads, address The Jantha Plantation Company, Block 465, Pittsburgh, Pa. You can have your trees planted and your land worked on shares, so as to bring you a thousand dollars a year. The health conditions are perfect and the climate grand.

Drawing the Line.

Dick—Dearest, I will follow you to the end of the earth.

Drusilla—No, you won't either. That is the North Pole, and you are not going to get me mixed up in any of these foolish explorers' controversies.

HER WRINKLES DISAPPEARED.

Mrs. Jennie Thompson, living at 1317R Admiral Blvd., Kansas City, Mo., removed her wrinkles by a simple process at home. She has nothing to sell, but says she will gladly tell anyone writing her what system she used

Then He Got Busy.

Him—If I were to kiss you would you scream for help?

Her—I would but for one thing.

Him—And what is that?

Her—I'd be afraid some one might accidentally hear me.

FREE ASTHMA CURE.

D. J. Lane, a chemist, at 115 Lane Bldg., St. Marys Kansas, manufactures a remedy for Asthma in which he has so much confidence that he sends a $1 bottle to anyone who will write for it. His offer is that he is to be paid for it if it cures, and the one taking the treatment is to be the judge.

The Tramp's Mistake.

Young Housekeeper (who got too much soda in her cake)—What! Want something to eat? What did you do with what I gave you?

Cleanly Tramp—I washed my hands with it, mum.

Giving Whiskey Free.

Any distillery that has sufficient confidence in their whiskey to give away a bottle in order that through its actual test, the proof of its merits will convince the user, certainly must know their goods will give satisfaction. The Kamp Distilling Co. of St. Louis, are now offering to give away free a bottle of their Celebrated Brookland Club Whiskey to prove its merits.

It's awfully hard to give away some things that you want to get rid of.

TACKLES

DURING SLEEP

Nature Repairs the Human Engine.

The activities of the day cause more or less waste of tissues in the human engine, which is repaired at night during sleep.

The man or woman who can sleep well at night, is sure of the necessary repairs, other things being right, to make each day a time of usefulness and living a real joy.

But let insomnia get hold of you, and the struggle begins, of trying to work with a machine out of repair. A Nebr. woman's experience with coffee as a producer of insomnia is interesting. She says:

"I used to be a coffee drinker and was so nervous I could not sleep at night before about 12 o'clock, unless I would take some medicine. I was under the doctor's care for about 5 years and my weight got down to 82 pounds.

"The doctor said I would have to quit drinking coffee. Then my father got me to try Postum which he said had done wonders for him. I am past 43 and before I quit drinking coffee, my heart would jump and flutter at times, miss a beat, then beat so fast I could hardly breathe in enough air and I would get smothered.

"My tongue would get so stiff I could not talk and I could not hold a glass to drink from. Since I have been drinking Postum, in place of coffee, I can sleep sound any time I lie down, and I feel I owe everything to Postum. I now weigh 120 lbs. and am well."

Read "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a Reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true and full of human interest.

Pickings.

It was a candid and graphic answer given by a waif to a Salvation Army captain. The zealous officer had asked the boy what work he did to provide him with food, etc., and the reply was:

"I pick strawberries in the summer, I pick hops in the autumn, I pick pockets in the winter, and oakum for the rest of the year."

Many Doctors Prescribe

proprietary medicines under a Latin name, charging for the written prescription three times the cost of the medicine, and do not hesitate to condemn that self-same medicine if it is advertised or mentioned by the public.

There are, however, many honest doctors who do not hesitate to openly recommend and prescribe such standard remedies as Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

Very Bad Form.

Daughter (after the theater)—That play was so interesting I couldn't do a thing but just sit and listen to it.

Fashionable Mother—It was abominable, the way you watched that play. People must have thought we were from the country.

LADIES, PRESERVE YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and reddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

The proceeds of Doctor Cook's lectures come under the head of the pole tax.

SHAKESPEARE REVISED.

Said Richard III.:

"Upon my word.

That horse gag gives me a pain;

I'll change it a bit

And make a great hit—

"'Me kingdom for an aeroplane!'"

A Witty Priest.

A story is told of that famous Irish wit, Father Healy of Bray, that on one occasion he was enjoying an argument with a Protestant minister on the subject of purgatory. The conversation had begun to flag, neither party showing a tendency to be convinced, when the Protestant minister remarked: "Well, I've lived sixty years in this world and I haven't found out the difference between a good Protestant and a good Catholic yet."

"Oh, haven't you?" replied Father Healy. "Well, you'll not be sixty seconds in the next world before you find out."

An Invalid's Request.

Steward (the first day out)—Did you ring, sir?

Traveler—Yes, steward, I—I rang.

Steward—Anything I can bring you, sir?

Traveler—Y-yes, st-steward. B-bring me a continent, if you have one, or an island—anything, steward, so l-lul-long as it's solid. If you can't, sus-sink the ship.

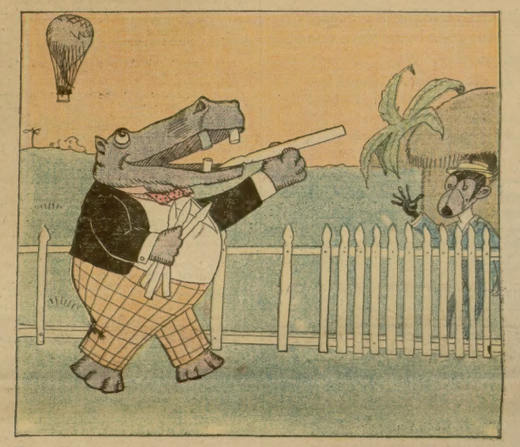
Science on the Run.

Doctor—Troubled with insomnia, eh? You must eat something before going to bed.

Patient—Why, doctor, you once told me never to eat anything before going to bed.

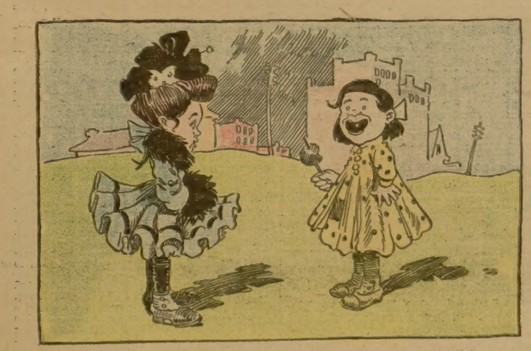
Doctor (with dignity)—That, madam, was way back in 1906. Science has made great strides since then.

HAPPY THOUGHT.



Hippo—Very thoughtful of Mister Monk to put these toothpicks out here. I'll take a few.

SIZED UP.



Mamie—They say Hester's pa gave her a real diamond ring on her birthday.

Kid Gaggs—Yes, but the diamond is small—no larger than a 10-cent piece of ice.

Familiar Phrase.

Contradictory evidence.

THE WITTY DUDE.

Ella was sifting cinders

Along with her sister Della;

Then up stepped a dude

With: "I hope I'm not rude—

But, ah, there, my Cinder-Ella."

The Reason.

Kind Old Man—Here, my good fellow, is a penny; now don't try to spend it foolishly.

Tattered Tom—But, kind sir, there is a hole in this penny.

Kind Old Man—That's why it would be foolish to try to spend it.

Cauticus.

The old gentleman was in a fury.

"Young man," he stormed in angry tones, "didn't I tell you never to darken my doorway again?"

"But—but I didn't darken it this time," ventured the trembling youth.

"What do you mean?"

"Why, I cleaned my shoes five times before I took one step on the sill. If the doorway has been darkened any I didn't do it, sir."

Modern Divorce Methods.

Lawyer—Do you live with your husband?

Witness—No, sir.

Lawyer—Are you divorced?

Witness—I don't know.

Lawyer—Eh? What's that? You don't know?

Witness—Certainly not. My husband never takes me into his confidence.

AGENTS WANTED

SWIFTLIT

WORKS LIKE CITY GAS

In Your Home or Store. No "Bonfire" to start it.

Lights like a flash with ¼ of a match. That's a fact which will cost you only 1 cent a day to realize if you use a "Swiftlit" Lamp. Think of that.

Radically different from any lamp you ever saw or heard of. *Just like City Gas and 25 better than a dozen kerosene lamps.* Gives from 100 to 500 candle-light power—a penetrating soft light, the best to read or sell goods by, or it will *light your whole street front* if hung over outer door.

No alcohol expense or tedious waiting. Acts simply by gravity or pressure feed. *Burners* which fit old lamps supplied cheaply. Thousands of "Swiftlit" Lamps are used by the people of the U. S. We were established in 1868. *You can't afford to be without one.* If you can be our agent in your neighborhood, write for wholesale price on specimen "Swiftlit" Lamp. Now, don't put it off. Write today. Hear by return mail. Then order if you want to. You will. PLANET MFG. CO., Dept. 18, ST. LOUIS.

MAN WANTED in each county to sell wire fish traps on halves. We furnish traps. Write us. LILES CROWSON, BIVINS, TEXAS.

WE PAY $36 A WEEK AND EXPENSES to men with rig to introduce poultry compound. Team unnecessary. IMPERIAL MFG. CO., Dept. 67, Parsons, Kansas

$3 Daily Paid Agents advertising pure herb tablets for Blood, Liver and Stomach disorders. Enclose stamp for samples. Seneca Medicine Co., Chicago

AGENTS $96 A WEEK EXPENSES PAID. No experience or capital required, 30 days credit; photo pillow tops $1.50; enlarged portraits, 10c; frames, lowest prices; samples and catalogue free. Dept.E, Ritter Art Studio, Chicago, Ill.

Sell Tobacco and Cigars

Locally or traveling. Salary or commission. Experience unnecessary—we give full instructions. Address MONOTOCK TOBACCO WORKS, Box 832 DANVILLE VIRGINIA

AGENTS $35 Weekly selling our Sunlight Gasoline burner; fits all lamps; ten times brighter than gas at 1-10th the cost. No generating; lights immediately. Sells on sight. Description and information free. SIMPLEX GASLIGHT CO., 23 Park Row, NEW YORK, Dept. B.

STARK Nurseries want more good salesmen everywhere. We pay cash and make liberal contract and give best outfit free. Establ'd 84 yrs. STARK BRO'S Louisiana, Missouri

AGENTS! DEALERS!

Post Cards $1.25 per 1,000 up; Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, Birthday, Comics, Motto, Love Series, etc., 25 assorted samples, 10c; 100 or 200, 1,000 assorted, all kinds, $2.50. OLARD CO., 2147 ARTHUR AVENUE, BRONX, NEW YORK

AGENTS SEND (Oc. NOW For handsome sample German silver Key Check with your name and address stamped thereon. Big commission for taking orders. We also supply blank Checks and stamping outfits. MART MFG. CO Dept. P 88 Guernsey St., Brooklyn, N.Y.

POST CARD AGENTS WANTED

We want boys and girls to introduce our Post Cards everywhere. Good pay. Send 5cts. stamps, for postage on package of beautiful assorted Sample Cards and our big Surprise Offer. POST CARD HOUSE, 2336 BROADWAY, SPRINGFIELD, MASS.

$3 a Day Sure Send us your address and we will show you how to make $3 a day absolutely sure. We furnish the work and teach you free, you work in the locality where you live. Send us your address and we will explain the business fully, remember we guarantee a clear profit of $3 for every day's work, absolutely sure. Write at once. ROYAL MANUFACTURING CO., Box 1016 Detroit, Mich

WE OFFER YOU A POSITION

We want 200 men right away. Must have them and will pay good money—$3.00 to $5.00 a day guaranteed according to class of work. YOU NEED NO MONEY. Everything done on our capital. You deliver our goods and collect. A BIG opportunity. Write today for free plans, sample outfit, etc. All free. G. H. GROUNDS, Manager, 1027 W. Adams, Street Dept. 4149, Chicago, Ill.

Make Easy X-Mas Money

Be wise—first hour—Be first in your territory. $50 per week made by Davis Agents. No expense spared to produce the most gorgeous Holiday packages, the result of our fifteen years' experience. We make our goods—You make 133% profit. Write today for confidential plan. Address E. M. DAVIS SOAP CO., 1417 Carroll Ave., CHICAGO

2 Gold Rings FREE Sell 10 packages Prof. Smith's Hair Tonic and Dandruff Remedy at 10c each. WE TRUST YOU. When sold return the $1 and we'll send these 2 gold laid rings, or choice from premium list. Write today. Estab. 14 years. ROSEBUD PERFUME CO., Box 188, Woodsboro, Md.

AGENTS 200% PROFIT

Handy, Automatic HAME FASTENER Do away with old hame strap. Horse owners and teamsters wild about them. Fasten instantly with gloves on. Outwear the harness. Money back if not satisfactory. Write today for confidential terms to agents. F. Thomas Mfg. Co., 717 Wayne St., Dayton, Ohio

Fine Pocket Knife FREE

To Agents. Send No Money. Your name and address put in handle—no extra charge.

SALESMEN make quick, big profits selling our scientifically tempered PHOTO POCKET KNIVES

Be your own boss. Write at once for good money making proposition and exclusive territory. CANTON CUTLERY CO., Dept. 31 CANTON, OHIO

A BOON TO EVERY HOUSEHOLD

The Sanitary Aluminum Tea & Coffee Strainer

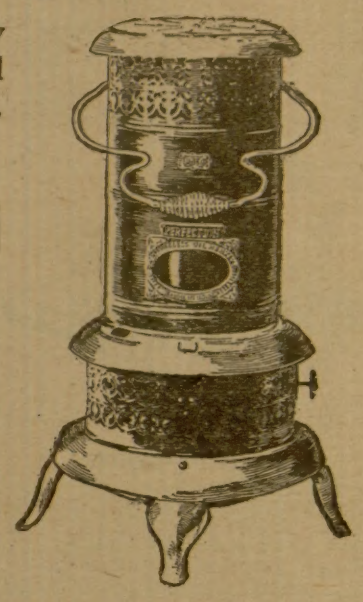
This strainer is the product of a long series of experiments and far superior to any in the market. It is a constant joy to any housewife, as light as a feather, resplendent as silver, durable as steel. Being made in a solid piece it has no joints to catch dirt, contagious germs or to retain greasy substances. The metal of which it is constructed prohibits rust, and although far lighter, it will outlast best wire strainer. Sample 15c. Agents wanted. W. C. WATKINS, P.O. Box 1306, Pittsburg, Pa.

AGENTS THE GREATEST CHRISTMAS SELLER OUT. MILLIONS BEING SOLD. You can make $100 clear by New Years. Everybody buys. No experience, talking or capital required. Any man or woman, young or old, can sell them. We trust you with from $5 to $25 worth of goods. It's money you want to make, here is your chance. Act quick. Time is short. We have no time to waste with curiosity seekers. If you want to make easy money and mean business, send 10c for ten samples today. Don't wait. CHARLES W. KEISER & CO., B6004 WENTWORTH AVENUE, CHICAGO, ILL.

Raising Temperature

depends upon the heater—how constructed—whether it gets all the fuel-energy or only some of it.

If the heater is a



PERFECTION Oil Heater

(Equipped with Smokeless Device)

the raising of the temperature is certain.

Turn the wick as high or low as it will go—there's no danger, no smoke, no smell—just an emphatic raising of temperature. The

Automatic Smokeless Device

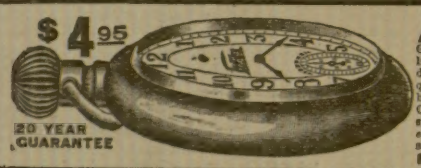
is a permanent check upon carelessness, making the heater safe in the hands of a child. Burns nine hours with one filling, heats all parts of a room quickly.

Oil indicator tells amount of oil in the all-brass font. Damper top. Cool handle. Aluminum window frame. Cleaned in a minute. Finished in Nickel or Japan. Various styles and finishes.

Every Dealer Everywhere. If Not at Yours, Write for Descriptive Circular to the Nearest Agency of the

STANDARD OIL COMPANY
(Incorporated)

$4.95



20 YEAR GUARANTEE

A $15.00 Watch for $4.95

Genuine eleven jeweled Railroad watch, worth $15 to anyone who requires an absolutely reliable timekeeper and a watch that will last a lifetime. Locomotive-on dial, stamped and guaranteed eleven jewels, breguet hairspring, patent regulator, quick train. Fitted in heavy or medium weight solid ore-silver dust proof screw case, both case and works absolutely guaranteed for 20 years. SEEING is BELIEVING. Cut this out and send it to us with your name, post office and express office address stating weight wanted, Heavy or Medium, and we will send the watch by express for examination. If satisfactory after examination pay express agent our bargain sale price $4.95 and express charges and it is yours. Order today. Address R. E. CHALMERS & CO., 352-356 Dearborn St., CHICAGO.

---

15 Jolly Old St. Nicholas Post Cards Free

Gold, Embossed, Beautifully Colored, Interesting and Amusing

15 Christmas and New Year's Cards Free

This is a very beautiful assortment of Christmas and New Year Greeting post cards including many and various arrangements of Santa Claus on his annual pleasure trip with his Sleigh and Deer. This series illustrates actions and conditions both the night before and Christmas Morning. Shows Santa with his pack and happy children the morning after his visit. These cards are mounted on Moire Silk and gold back ground, Embossed and beautifully colored, they constitute a valuable and entertaining collection for the young and older folks. This handsome assortment is mailed in an especially made Holly Box upon which appears absolutely no advertising matter of any description.

Perfect Christmas Present

This set of beautiful Christmas, New Year and Santa Claus cards will be sent to you free of cost providing you agree to

do us a small favor in return for our sending you these handsome seasonable post cards. A package of assorted Santa Claus post cards will also be sent Free to each of two of your friends or neighbors as soon as you return the favor we ask.

Your Friends and Neighbors Will Want

the Santa Claus cards after they see your set. You will find it very easy and a simple matter to get a package of Santa Claus post cards for your two friends. Remember the post cards are sent to you free as pay for your effort. We do not ask you to do the work first, but will mail you this especially made box and assortment of cards when we receive the coupon from you.

Don't Delay—Act Quickly

You want your friends to receive their assortment of cards as soon as possible on account of the approaching Christmas. They will want to use these cards.

COUPON

HOME LIFE, 323 Sawyer Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

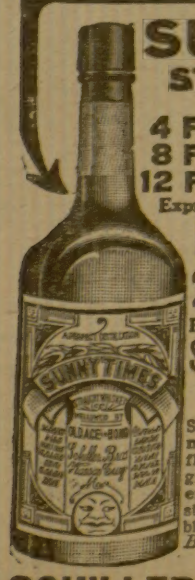
Gentlemen:—I have carefully read your offer and inclose five 2-cent stamps (10 cents) to cover postage, packing and a trial subscription to Home Life. I promise to show my cards to two of my friends when you tell me how they can get 12 Santa Claus cards like mine, which I am to receive as soon as I send you this coupon.

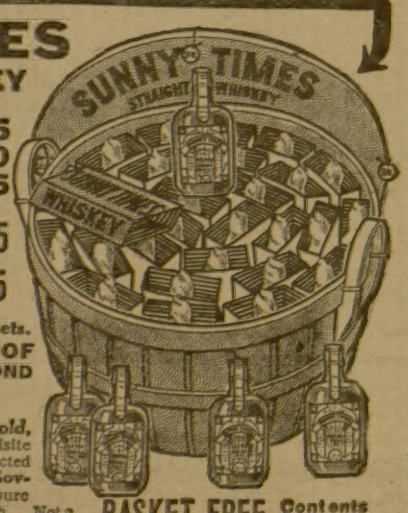
Name.....

Town.....

R. F. D. or St. No..... State.....

SUNNY TIMES
STRAIGHT WHISKEY
AGED IN BOND





4 Full Quarts, $2.95
8 Full Quarts, $5.50
12 Full Quarts, $8.25
Express Prepaid—Packed in Baskets

12 FULL PINTS SUNNY TIMES $4.95

24 FULL ½ PINTS SUNNY TIMES $4.95

Express Prepaid—Packed in Baskets.

SUNNY TIMES 100 PROOF AGED IN BOND STRAIGHT WHISKEY
Put up in Pints and ½ Pints

SUNNY TIMES, 100 proof is a pure, old, mellow, straight whiskey of exquisite flavor. It is Distilled from choice selected grain, and Aged in Bond in U. S. Government Warehouses, Guaranteed pure straight whiskey free from adulteration. Not a blend or compound, but a Pure, Straight Whiskey.

Beware of unscrupulous dealers who imitate this original package and contents.

BASKET FREE Contents Unknown

Send Remittance to and Order From Your Nearest House

SCHILLER BROS. Dept. 205 KANSAS CITY, MO. and CAIRO, ILL.

In African Jungles.

(Continued from page seven.)

who was dressed in European garments, and who seemed to have complete control of the naked savages swarming about the fire.

"Who are all those people out there?" Bement asked, pointing out to the moving forms.

"Natives," was the short reply. "Lie down and rest. You won't be injured."

With this assurance Bement had to be content. He threw himself on a rough camp bed made of poles and lay for a long time watching the scene outside. Then he dropped off into a restless sleep, in the midst of which he heard his name called.

For a moment he thought it was time to get up, and that he was in his old Chicago flat. It seemed that Susie would be pounding on his door again in a moment. Then came a realization of his situation, and he was wide awake once more.

Then he heard his name called again. That certainly was his sister's voice! He did not move. If he was having dreams like this, he thought, it might be just as well to lie still and enjoy them!

In a minute another voice came to him, a sweet, fresh voice, feminine and sympathetic.

"Oh, let him sleep!" the voice said. "He must be deadly tired!"

"I called only to see if he was awake," said the first voice.

There was no longer any doubt about it. That was Susie. Bement sprang to his feet and moved toward the door of the hut.

"If I'm not having strange dreams," he cried, "that is Susie."

There followed a little cry of joy, a rustle of skirts, and then Susie was there in his arms.

"Pinch me!" cried the young man. "I'm dreaming, I'm sure."

Susie laughed.

"It is not a dream," she said. "I'm here, in the heart of Africa."

"I can't tell you how glad I am to see you," replied Bement, "and yet I must admit that I am sorry to see you here."

"Why, I've always wanted to come to Africa," said the girl.

"How did you manage it?"

"Oh, that is a long story. I can't tell you about it now."

"I heard another voice a moment ago," said Bement. "Who is with you?"

"In reply to the question Susie, who was a very fine looking girl indeed, stepped to the opening and called softly:

"Clellie!"

Clellie came in a moment, a tall, lithe girl with waving hair and dancing blue eyes. Bement studied her face eagerly before stepping forward to meet her. She was not the girl he had seen under the flashlight! So there was still another girl in the remarkable drama that was going on!

"This," said Susie, "is Clellie Norman, daughter of M. K. Norman."

"It takes two girls to put up a job like this!" smiled Bement. "The idea of your coming out to Africa to find me. And how did you succeed in getting the natives under such perfect control, and who is the native who goes about picking white men out of trees and speaking English like a New Yorker?"

"Too many questions!" smiled Clellie. "Seems like some modern Aladdin had been rubbing a lamp, doesn't it? We've had the greatest run of luck we ever heard of since we came here! Couldn't have done it otherwise."

"I don't think we ought to spend any more of the night in conversation," said the sister. "We've got a long way to travel tomorrow, so we'd better get to bed."

"But how does it come that you found me so quickly?" asked Bement. "Tell me how you charm these savages."

Judging by the glances of admiration bestowed upon the bright face of Miss Clellie Norman by the young man, it did not seem so much of a mystery, after all, how the savages had been brought to subjection.

"We are not the only ones who have found you," replied Susie. "There are officers here after you, and we're going to take you into the mountains as fast as we can march. You'll see the head of the party in the morning. We're going in after diamonds."

"Diamonds!" repeated Bement. "Why, Morris, is——"

Clellie looked up eagerly, a shadow of anxiety on her face.

"Who is Morris?" she asked.

"Why," was the reply, "he's a diamond expert, and he's going into the Karamoyo Mountains, up about Lake Rudolf somewhere, after the largest diamonds in the world."

"Where did you see him?" asked Clellie, after exchanging significant glances with Susie. "Is he near this spot?"

"He is at the camp from which I was taken," was the reply.

The girls were silent for a long time. It was plain to see that the information they had received was not of a pleasing character. Bement was thinking fast. He was searching his mind for a short conversation, or the points of it, rather, which he had had with Morris.

During that conversation Morris had told of a robbery which had taken place in New York. Bement could not recall the details of the affair, but he finally remembered enough of it to bring to his mind the fact that Morris' plans and maps for entering Africa and locating the diamonds had been stolen.

Was it possible that his sister had become a member of the party led in by the man who had committed the theft? In her desire to get to her brother, had she joined hands with the man who was trying to rob Morris of his reward? Anyway, it was clear to him that two parties were after the diamonds, and that his sister seemed to be with the wrong one!

"What do you know about Morris?" he asked.

"Why," replied Clellie, "he is a man father and I met in New York, and——"

"Is it your father who is at the head of the party?" asked Bement. "And are you bound for the north end of Lake Rudolf?"

"Wait!" commanded a voice in the doorway. "Who is it that asks a question like that. What do you know of the diamond mines up there?"

Bement found himself facing a short, stocky man with a bulldog jaw and a pair of suspicious eyes. He lifted a hand as Bement looked and pointed a finger.

"What do you know about the diamonds of Lake Rudolf?" he repeated, angrily.

CHAPTER XII.

NORMAN IN DEADLY DANGER.

The manner of the man was insulting in the extreme, and the young man made no immediate reply. Clellie came to the rescue.

"Why, father," she said, "Mr. Bement tells us that Morris is with the party he has just left."

Norman's arm fell to his side. His face took on a look of anger.

"And you understood what he is after?" he shouted to Bement. "You helped to bring him in here to rob me?"

"Father!" cautioned Clellie.

"I want to know the truth!" shouted Norman, weaving his stocky body about in his rage, facing first the girls and then Bement. "I want to know what this all means? I'm not going to be made a catspaw. How long has he been following us?"

"I don't know," was the cool reply. "He joined us at Lake Chioga, a day ago."

"Before that—before he came—did you know anything about the diamond mines out there to the east?"

"Why father!" exclaimed Clellie. "How could he know?"

"But that girl there—his sister knew! You told her when she came to me begging to be taken to Africa in order that she might find her brother. She knew! Is it impossible that she should communicate with him?"

"I don't know anything about your diamonds, nor do I wish to!" said Bement, angrily. "Morris says his maps and plans were stolen in New York, and that is about all he ever confided to me."

"Did he say stolen?" roared Norman. "The villain."

"Father," said Clellie, "it is useles to discuss the matter in the frame of mind you are now in. We have a hard day before us, and may as well get what rest we can."

"Before I leave this young man," declared Norman, "I want to know if there is a conspiracy against me, and whether he is in it."

"I am not interested in the diamonds," replied Bement. "If you speak of conspiracies, what do you think of the manner in which I was dragged here to your camp? I am a prisoner this moment."

"Then," said Norman, pointing to the girls, "there are your captors. I've been to busy with my own affairs to mix up in yours."

"And they haven't informed me why I was captured," said Bement, with a smile in the direction of the girls.

"Why, I told you that the officers were after you," said Susie.

"So you had me abducted by a friendly native?"

"Certainly."

"And you left the letter in the pit on the floating island?" asked Bement.

The three looked at each other in amazement.

"Do you girls know anything of any letter, or pit, or floating island?" asked the father. "What have you been doing?"

"Not a thing, Dad!" answered Clellie. "It is all Greek to us.

"Then," said Bement, "there is still another party in here, but whether they are after wild animals, or diamonds, or Bement, the good Lord only knows. I reckon I'd better find a balloon and get up in the air somewhere!"

"Still another party!" shouted Norman. "Where?"

"I don't know," was the reply. "I don't know much of anything. I'm all mixed up with the scenery, and the floating islands, and the wild animals, and a new party coming in every fifteen minutes. How did you happen out here, anyway, Susie?"

"I came to find my big brother," replied the girl. "When I got to Mombasa I learned that you had joined fortunes with Mr. Kalkenbrenner, also that the officers were after you, and so I came on after you. When you stopped at the place where you were detained by the desertion of the carriers, we got ahead of you."

"Why didn't you come up and warn me, like a civilized human being?" asked Bement.

"Because I was watched, too, and my going to you would have betrayed the whole thing. Besides, I wanted to get into the jungle. It is safer for you here, too."

"And had me taken prisoner," laughed Bement. "How did it chance that you were able to charm the savages into letting you alone?"

"Mr. Norman has been here before," was the reply, "and the savages are his friends. Bamali, the man who captured you, was with him in New York.

While the brother and sister were explaining matters, a native came into the fire circle and whispered to Mr. Norman. That gentleman immediately turned to Bement.

"The girls didn't capture you any too soon," he said. "The president of the Cosmos Trust Company and a Chicago detective are out there with Kalkenbrenner now. They came in five minutes after you left."

Bement gave vent to a low whistle.

"That settles it!" he cried. "I was thinking of letting Kalkenbrenner know of my safety, but it is best that he should know nothing of my whereabouts, so he'll have to be kept guessing for a time."

"And Morris with him?" roared Norman. "Not on your life! You can't send word to Kalkenbrenner without letting him know that you are with a party bound for the inside, and he would spot me in a minute. You keep away from that chap!"

"That is just what I propose doing," answered Bement. "As long as old Kilrain is with him he'll hear nothing from me."

And so it was that the two parties started for Lake Rudolf working at cross purposes.

Bement did not sleep well, weary as he was, during the remainder of the night. He was thinking of the proximity of the president of the Cosmos, and of the girl in white. Who was the girl in white? Why had she interested herself in him? What had protected her in the jungle that night when

the flashlight had shown her only a few feet away from two man-eaters?

The camp was early astir, as Norman was anxious to get a good start of Morris, who seemed to be racing with him for the diamond fields.

"Kalkenbrenner," he said to Bement, "will hang about his camp for several days, hunting for you, and Morris will remain with him, also this president of the trust company. You want to keep out of Kilrain's way and I want to keep ahead of Morris, so we may as well work together and keep going until we reach the diamonds."

"How do you know there are diamonds off there?" asked Bement.

"Because I've been there. I've seen them!"

"And you think that Morris is headed for the same place?"

"Certainly."

"Then your maps must be the same."

"I have no doubt of it. Copies of mine were stolen."

"That is what Morris says."

"Well, I didn't steal mine. I made mine, right on the spot. He doesn't claim that he made his, does he? Of course he doesn't. He was never in here, so far as I can learn. If he's got maps at all, they are copies of mine, and he bought them from some thief. He may have had his stolen, too, but I don't believe it."

Bement did not feel competent to decide between the two men, both of whom had aided him materially. He studied over the matter at times, when he was not puzzling over the girl-in-white incident, but decided to let the matter work itself out in its own way.

When they started off that morning they turned from the course which had been mapped out and struck north. This, Norman figured, would bring them out to the Juba River. Kalkenbrenner and Morris, he thought, would keep on in a westerly direction, aiming to strike the Lake Rudolf basin by way of the break in the Karamoyo Mountains.

They were now in the elephant country. Herds of huge animals were seen every day. At night their trumpetings kept the natives awake. Lions and leopards were also plentiful. Bement often wondered if Kalkenbrenner was having success in capturing the kind he required to fill his orders.

After a few days they came in sight of the Juba River. Here hippopotami were very much in evidence.

One night, after supper, Susie and Clellie persuaded Bement and Norman to go out for a moonlight hunt for the big creatures.

"It isn't safe," Norman insisted. "I've been here before, and know something of the nature of the beasts. They are like cows, and not sporty at all, but if one gets after you you'd better have a tree handy. They look clumsy enough, but their first rush is swift, and they'll ram and trample you into a shapeless man."

"But we'll keep out of their way," urged the girls.

"You think that you will," grunted Norman, "but sometimes you can't keep out of their way."

The party was now on the north bank of the Juba River, having crossed on a giant raft constructed by the carriers. Miles and miles off to the south the lofty peak of Mount Ruball shone in the sunlight. While they were getting ready for the hunt clouds began to gather, and it was plain that a tropical storm was coming up.

However, the girls insisted on seeing a battle with the hippos, and so the hunting party took shelter behind a tangle of bushes on the bank of the river and waited. There were hippo trails all about them, and it was pretty certain that they would have a good shot before long, so they waited patiently, though the mosquitoes annoyed them terribly.

Before long a big hippo snowed his head about fifty yards away, close to the bank of the river. Bement threw up his gun, but Norman told him to wait until the hippo came out of the water. When a hippo is killed in water his body immediately sinks, and does not come to the surface for several days.

After a long wait the hippo came out of the water and moved about in the bushes, gradually approaching the hunting party. Clellie arose in her excitement and showed herself for only an instant, but that was enough. The big bull charged the thicket.

The girls screamed and fled and Bement was not slow in following them. Norman, however, stood his ground, thinking apparently, to kill the animal before it reached the thicket. The hippo came on with the speed of a race horse and Norman stood ready to fire. Then the moon slid into a cloud and all was dark.

Bement could hear the heavy tread of the hippo as he rushed after his prey. A shot came, but the tramp came on. There followed a shout for help, a scream of agony, and the ground shook under the trampings of the beast.

The cries faded into a heavy groan and then all was still.

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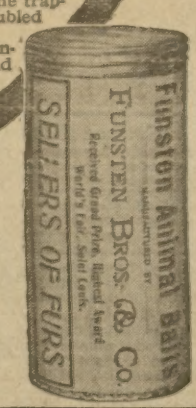

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A Loveless Bridal.

(Continued from page five.)

be. "I will say no more," and she turned away with tears in her eyes.

In utter silence the finishing touches to the bride's toilet were given.

Marcella, as stately in her beauty as a queen, went through it all with a calmness that startled Dularia.

"Now we shall await the summons," she said. "It is near the hour and I hear voices below."

Ten minutes later a low rap sounded on Marcella's door and upon opening it she came face to face with Mrs. Stanley. The plotting woman fell back with a cry at sight of her niece.

"Beautiful! superb!" she exclaimed at the vision of womanly fascination by which she was confronted.

Marcella did not reply.

"The hour is come and the bridegroom waits," continued Mrs. Stanley.

Marcella went forward with a sudden glance at Dularia.

Gathering up her rich train she walked solemnly toward the broad stair, with a strange look in her deep eyes.

Accompanied by her aunt she went down the velvet-carpeted steps and entered the luxurious parlor. A flood of rich, soft light pervaded the place.

The great room was almost untenanted. At one side stood the man who had accompanied Ramon Doan to the house, and near by was the form of Doctor Judas.

Ramon himself stood near the door and was the first to greet Marcella.

Leaning over the balustrade of the broad stair were the servants, the tearful Dularia and the one who had emptied the contents of the vial into Marcella's last tea.

"They say he's not rich at all," said Dularia, with a pursing of her ashen lips. "It's a shame, that's what it is! They're selling her, as ever a soul was sold."

"You'd be glad of the chance, I'm thinking," was the response from Mrs. Stanley's maid. "He's a real Apollo——"

"But a social Nero," flashed Dularia. "Matches of this sort aren't made in Heaven, I don't care what they say."

"She does well to capture him."

"Wait," said Dularia. "She's not his wife yet," and the poor faithful girl hoped in the depth of her heart that something would yet occur to defeat the plot against her mistress.

Seconds seemed hours to the watchers on the stair.

Doctor Judas, watching Marcella like a hawk from the slight shadow in which he stood, was strangely puzzled.

"It's queer," he said to himself. "She seems to have her will, yet Leo said the potion has been administered."

The minister advanced to the middle of the room.

Dularia, on the stair, uttered a cry.

"I told you so," said the other maid at her side. "If you thought she would reject him you are fooled."

Dularia said nothing. Her face was the hue of the snow.

The painful silence which followed Marcella's entrance into the room was suddenly broken by the voice of the minister.

Leaning lightly upon Ramon Doan's arm Marcella, still stately in her veiled beauty, stood at the altar.

She had given her solemn promise that she would become the wife of the man at her side, and there was as yet nothing to indicate that her word was not to stand.

Amid silence of the most solemn nature the words which made her the wife of Ramon Doan were spoken. Mrs. Stanley threw a rapid glance toward Doctor Judas. The little man returned it with a meaning smile.

"It is done!" suddenly rang out the voice of Marcella, as with one sweep she threw back the folds of the gauzy white veil. "The infamy of years has been accomplished. I am the wife of Ramon Doan, but wife in name only. The consummation of this bitter bridal shall never be. Sooner than feel upon my brow the lips of the man I have wed I would drive a dagger to my heart. Each one concerned in the plot against my love and my honor shall feel the hand of vengeance! The blood of Donald Steele is in my veins, and it will assert itself! Go your way!" and she turned upon Ramon Doan. "Go your way, I say, and I will go mine. Call me wife if you will, but know that I am that only in name. I will bless and forward the hour when the bonds that bind us now are severed, for severed they shall be! You have triumphed, Aunt Stanley, and you, man of poisons, you have planned with the rest. It takes more than one to make a happy union. Marcella Doan now, I am still in heart and mind Marcella Steele, and nothing shall ever turn the channel of my love to the wretch whom I have wedded. Go, I say! May the curse of God follow all who would sell me at a loveless altar, for, as I live, this marriage shall be dissolved and the guilty punished!"

With her last word Marcella turned toward the door. Mrs. Stanley sprang forward.

"Back!" cried Marcella, covering her with her finger. "Return to yonder viperous brood and gloat over the short triumph you have won!"

The next moment the white-faced girl was beyond the room.

"Gods!" cried Doctor Judas. "There must have been a mistake somewhere!"

"It is yours," exclaimed Mrs. Stanley, "for the drug was administered."

As for Ramon Doan, he only looked at the open door, as if he was holding on the tablets of his brain the thrilling picture he had just seen.

(Continued next week.)

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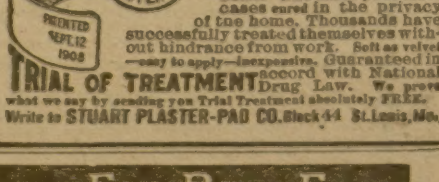

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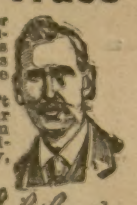

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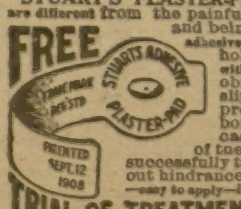

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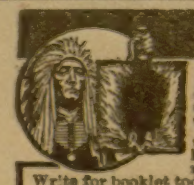

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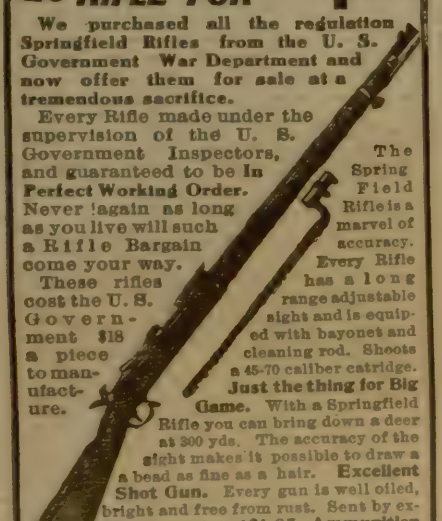

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CHAPTER I.

A PLUNGE DOWN THE RAPIDS.

KNEELING in a "bull-boat," fashioned from the skin of an animal, and wielding a paddle with the dexterity only to be attained after years of practice in canoeing, a sturdily-built and thoroughly bronzed Canadian lad glanced ever and anon back along the course he had so recently passed over, and then up at the black storm clouds hurrying out of the mysterious North.

It was far away in the wilderness of the Northwest, where this fierce tributary of the great Saskatchewan came pouring down from the timber-clad hills; and all around the lone voyager lay some of the wildest scenery to be met with on the whole continent.

Here and there in this vast territory one might come across the occasional trading posts of the wide-reaching Hudson Bay Company, at each of which the resident factor ruled with the arbitrary power of a little czar; or, it might be the fire of some Ishmaelite of the forest, a wandering "timber-cruiser," marking out new and promising fields for those he served, and surveying the scene of possible future bustling logging camps; otherwise the country at this time was a vast unknown land, seldom penetrated by human kind, save the Indian fur gatherers.

Considering that he was in so vast a wilderness this adventurous lad appeared to have scant luggage in his well battered bullboat—indeed, beyond the skin jacket, which he had thrown off because of his exertions, there did not seem to be anything at all aboard the craft, not even a gun, by means of which he might have provided himself with food while on the journey downstream.

This singular fact would seem to indicate that he might have had trouble of some sort back yonder; and indeed, the occasional glances which he cast over his shoulder added strength to this possibility; though the look upon his strong face was more in the line of chagrin and anger than fear.

Now and then he shook his curly head and muttered something; and once a name passed his lips in anything but a friendly fashion—Alexander Gregory.

Swifter grew the current, giving plain warning to one so well versed as this lad must be in the vagaries of these mad rivers of the Silent Land that presently it would be racing furiously down a steep incline, with razor-edged rocks on every side, apparently only too eager to rend asunder the frail canoe of the adventurous cruiser.

Still Owen Dugdale continued to ply the nimble paddle, weaving it in and out like a shuttle. He kept to the middle of the river when it would seem to at least have been the part of wisdom had he edged his craft closer to either shore, so that he might, in time, make a safe landing in preference to trusting himself to the mercy of the wild rapids, in which his frail bullboat would be but as a chip in the swirl of conflicting waters.

Already had the vanguard of the storm swept down upon him.

An inky pall began to shut out the daylight, and when a sudden flash of lightning cleft the low-hanging clouds overhead the effect was perfectly staggering. The roar of thunder that followed quick upon its heels was like the explosion of a twelve-inch gun as heard in the steel-jacketed turret of a modern battleship.

Again and again was the rushing river, with its grim forest-clad shores lighted up by the rapid-fire electric flashes, and all around crashed the loud-toned thunderclaps, rumbling and roaring until the whole affair became a perfect pandemonium, and brave indeed must be the soul that could gaze upon it without dismay and flinching.

It was just then, before the rain had begun to descend, and while the artillery of Heaven flashed and roared with all the fury of a Gettysburg, that Owen Dugdale found himself plunging into the dangerous rapids, ten times more to be feared under such conditions than ordinary.

Possibly he may have regretted his rashness in sticking to the middle of the channel until it was too late to change his course; but apparently the solitary young Canuck was at the time in somewhat of a desperate frame of mind, and recked little what might be the result of his mad act of defiance to the combined powers of tempest and boiling rapids.

At least he showed no signs of shrinking from the consequences.

Beyond shifting his weight a trifle, as if to settle himself better for the desperate work that faced him, he remained just as before, on his knees and crouching amidships, holding his paddle poised as if ready to thrust it into the swirling water at a second's notice, to stay the progress of the canoe as it lunged toward a threatening rock, or glided too near a roaring whirlpool, where disaster was certain to follow.

Owen Dugdale was no novice at shooting rapids, though never before could he have undertaken such a fierce fight as the one in which he was now engaged, for the combination of the elements made it simply appalling.

The stirring scene might have appealed to the instinct of an artist; but so far as the lad was concerned he had only eyes for the perils with which he was surrounded, and his whole soul seemed wrapped up in the prompt meeting of each emergency as it flashed before him.

A dozen times he would have met with sudden disaster but for the instantaneous manner in which his hand followed the promptings of his brain; and even then it was a mighty close shave more than once, for the boat rubbed up against several snags in whirling past, any one of which would have sunk the frail craft had it been a head-on collision.

Once he had to paddle like a madman to keep from being sucked into the largest whirlpool along the course, which seemed to reach out eager fingers and strive to the utmost to engulf him in its gluttonous maw.

Thanks to the almost incessant lightning Owen was enabled to see these perils in time to take action, else he must have been speedily overwhelmed in the fury of the rushing waters.

While the time might have seemed an eternity to the brave lad who battled for his very life, in reality it could not have been more than a couple of minutes at most that he was shooting down that foamy descent, dodging hither and thither as the caprice of the rapids or the impetus of his paddle dictated.

Just below him was the finish of the dangerous fall, and as so often happens, the very last lap proved to be more heavily charged with disaster than any of those above, even though they appeared to be far worse.

Being a son of the wilderness Owen Dugdale had probably never heard of the kindred terrors that used to lie in wait for the bold mariners of ancient Greece—the rock and the whirlpool known as Scylla and Charybdis—if they missed being impaled upon the one they were apt to be engulfed in the other—and yet here in the rapids of this furious Saskatchewan feeder he was brought face to face with a proposition exactly similar to that of mythology.

He strove valiantly to meet the occasion, and his sturdy sweep of the paddle did send him away from the ugly pointed rock; but the last whirlpool was so close that he was not enabled to fully recover in time to throw his whole power into the second stroke; consequently his canoe was caught in the outer edge of the swirl, and before one could even wink twice it capsized.

This was not the first time Owen had met with such a disaster while shooting rapids,

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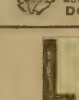

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and he had his wits about him for all of the confusion that surrounded him there.

His very first act was to clutch hold of the canoe, and throw all his energies into the task of avoiding the deadly suction of the whirlpool, for once he fell into its grip there must be only a question of seconds ere he reached its vortex and went under.

Fortune, aided by his own violent efforts, favored him, and as a result he managed to swim down the balance of the rapid, and reach the smoother waters below, still hanging on with a desperate clutch to his poor old boat, while his other hand gripped the paddle.

The canoe was full of water, but it did not sink, being buoyant enough to keep on the surface; but Owen found it as much as he could do to push the unwieldly thing along when he began to make for the nearest shore.

Exciting as this venture had been, it was only an episode in a life such as he had spent up in this vast region, where the first lesson a boy learns is to take care of himself, and meet peril in any guise.

The canoe was full of water.

There was not the least doubt with regard to his ability to gain the nearby shore with his wrecked canoe, even if left to himself; but nevertheless, when his ears caught the sound of encouraging shouts, and he realized that his perilous descent of the rapids had been witnessed by sympathetic eyes, it gave him a thrill to know that friends were near by and waiting to assist him, if such were necessary.

But young Dugdale was an independent lad, accustomed to relying altogether upon his own endeavors, as one must always do whose life is spent in the heart of the Great Lone Land of the Far Northwest; and hence he kept on swimming with his boat until he could wade, and in this way came up out of the river dripping, temporarily held in check by his misfortune, but not in the least dismayed.

Two figures hurried to meet him, though they arrived too late to give him a helping hand in effecting a landing.

Owen looked at them in amazement—he had at the most anticipated that those whose encouraging shouts had reached his ears while in the water must be some timber-cruisers who chanced to be camping at the foot of the rapids for the fishing to be found there; or it might be several of the halfbreed voyageurs employed by the Hudson Bay Company to carry furs from far distant posts to some station on the railroad; but he found himself gazing upon neither.

Two boys confronted him, neither of them much older than himself, and utter strangers at that.

Owen had never had a chum, and indeed, his life had been a lonely one, faced by responsibilities that had made him much older than his years—his scanty associations had been with hardy lumbermen or voyageurs, so that the presence of this twain struck him as the most mysterious and remarkable thing in all his experience.

And they seemed so solicitous concerning his welfare, insisting upon taking hold of the boat and pulling the same clear of the water, that he almost began to fancy he must be dreaming.

"Now," exclaimed the taller of the two, when this job had been finished, "come right up to our tent, where we have a bully fire that will dry you off in a jiffy. And our coffee is just ready, too—I rather guess that'll warm you up some. Eli, it's lucky you made an extra supply, after all. Looks as if you expected we'd have company drop in on us. I'll carry the paddle—good you hung on to it, for it's a tough job to whittle one out, I know. Here we are, old chap, and believe me, you're a thousand times welcome!"

CHAPTER II.

THE CAMP UNDER THE HEMLOCKS.

Young Owen Dugdale's heart thrilled within him.

In all his life he could not exactly remember a single time when he had been thus warmly welcomed to any camp. Why, it was almost worth shooting the rapids and meeting with disaster to hear such words, and feel that every one was meant.

Who were these lads, and why were they here in this faraway land?

His astonished eyes fell upon the craft that had evidently carried them up the river from some hamlet scores, perhaps hundreds, of miles away; and such a dandy canoe Owen Dugdale had never dreamed existed in the whole wide world, for it was of varnished cedar, and glistened there under the hemlocks with its nickeled trimmings in the flash of the lightning and the glow of the protected campfire.

He seemed to feel somehow that this apparent calamity upon the river had been the "open sesame" for him to enter upon a new and perhaps delightful experience; rather a rough introduction perhaps, but then he knew only such in the range of his past.

And the delicious odor of that supper was enough to arouse the dormant appetite of one who had forsworn all cookery, one of these modern cranks determined to exist upon nuts and fruit, which our young friend of the bullboat certainly was not.

Both lads bustled about trying to make him comfortable near the cheery blaze, and then filling a pannikin with the canoeist's stew of corn beef, succotash and left-over potatoes, they invited him to set-to, nor wait for them a second.

Owen could not have restrained himself, once his nostrils became saturated with those delicious odors, and he started to eat like a starving chap; as indeed, he came very near being, seeing that he had not partaken of a mouthful of food for almost twenty-four hours, and then but scantily.

Then came a cup of such coffee as he had never before tasted, with condensed milk to mellow the same; and close at his hand was placed a package of crackers into which he was expected to dip as the humor seized him.

Boys never like to talk while hungry, and no matter how strong the curiosity on both sides might be, nothing was said beyond the usual courtesies necessary in passing things, until one and all declared themselves satisfied.

But, although their tongues were silent during this half-hour, their eyes did double duty, and Owen found a thousand things at which to wonder.

The canoe had been enough to excite his curiosity, but everything he saw about the camp was in keeping with such luxury—the dun-colored tent was a beauty, and doubtless positively waterproof, for the rain that had been beating down ever since they commenced eating had found no inlet; and the fly over the fire sufficed to keep it from being extinguished—here he saw several warbags of the same kind of canvas, evidently used for the storage of clothes and provisions; and in addition there were a couple of guns, rubber ponchos, gray blankets that peeped out of two expensive sleeping bags, and a couple of black japanned boxes the contents of which he could not picture, unless they might be something in the way of surveyors' instruments; for Owen had once seen a party of these gentry running a line through the forest, and hence his vague application now.

These things had been taken in with a few glances around; but the two boys themselves occupied most of his attention, and he found himself trying to study out what they were—the taller one he understood immediately must be in command, for his whole appearance indicated it, while the shorter chap was of the caliber not unlike himself, bronzed from a life in the open, and with a cheery manner that drew the waif toward him from the start.

Both were dressed for business, with no unnecessary frills; and it was evident that if the leader of the mysterious expedition was possessed of unlimited means he also had

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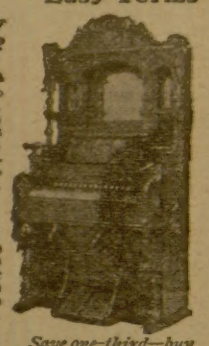

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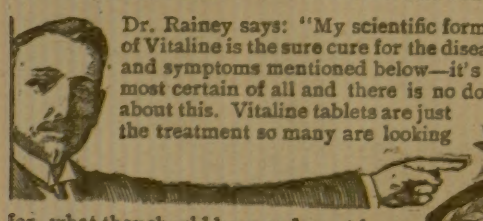

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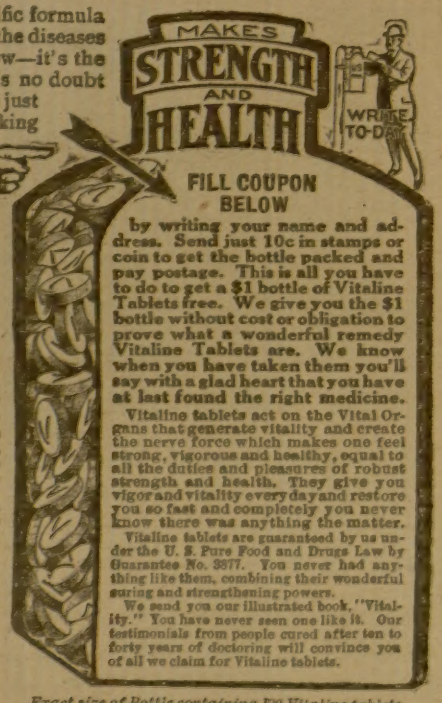

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enough common sense to deny himself luxuries when upon such a long cruise.

When every one declared that not another bite could be taken, Eli pulled out a pipe, being evidently addicted to smoking, and his comrade, finding that the newcomer had dried out pretty thoroughly, hunted up a spare jacket from one of the bags, which he insisted upon Owen donning, since the storm, now a thing of the past, had been followed by a cool wave that made the fire doubly pleasant.

"Now," said the tall lad, with one of his winning smiles, that drew Owen to him so wonderfully; "let's exchange confidences a bit, just as far as you care to go and no further. First of all my name is Cuthbert Reynolds, and I'm from across the border, a Yankee to the backbone; and this is Eli Perkins, also an American boy, a native of the lumber regions of Michigan, and with his fortunes bound up in mine."

"And I'm Owen Dugdale," said the other, knowing the pause was intended for him to break in with the mention of his name; "a native Canuck, and at home in this timber region—my parents were of Scotch descent I believe. And the first thing I want to say is that I'm mighty glad to be here with you just now. I was just about as hungry as a bear, and only for you I don't see what I could have done, after that ducking, for my matches must have been wet, and I would have gone to sleep hungry and cold."

The tall lad hastened to interrupt him, evidently not fancying being thanked for doing what was apparently the greatest pleasure in the world to him.

"Hold on, please; we understand all that. You're a thousand times welcome, and I tell you right now nothing could have happened to please me better than meeting up with you. You can bet there's something besides chance in it. Now, naturally you're wondering what in the dickens two fellows of our stripe are doing wandering about up here in the Far Northwest like a couple of nomads. Well, perhaps when you learn the actual truth you'll wonder harder than ever how it is one of us has escaped landing in a lunatic asylum up to this time; but as some of my friends say to me, youthful enthusiasm is responsible for many queer things, and so long as my wonderful ambition is to copy after Stanley in the line of exploring, why, they don't worry. They say I have more money than I know what to do with, anyway, and if it must be blown in somehow, why, this is a harmless way of doing it, dangerous only to myself, and any other foolish chap whom I may influence to accompany me on my mad expeditions," and as he spoke he glanced affectionately in the direction of the homely, freckled but good-humored Eli, who returned the look with a grin and an emphatic nod of approval.

"Now, you see, Eli has been with the lumbermen all his life, and is as hardy as they make them. What he doesn't know about the woods isn't worth telling; and so we make a pretty good team, for I've picked up a little knowledge about camp life during my canoeing days in the East, and manage to fill in the gaps in Eli's education, along the line of woodcraft.

"I might as well make a full confession in the start, for you're bound to get on to my weakness if we see much of each other, and I hope we will. Ever since I was knee-high to a grasshopper I've been inoculated with the exploring bee, read everything ever printed in that line, and pictured myself doing wonderful stunts like Livingstone and Stanley. It was only to be expected then that when I was left my own master at the death of my father, I would pursue my hobby to the limit; and I rather guess I have been on the jump for two years. Haven't made myself famous yet, and a little of my enthusiasm in that line has dribbled away; but I'm just as determined to work in the field of research as ever; only age is beginning to tone down my earlier wild notions, and after this last and crowning folly I think I shall hitch up with some veteran who knows it all, and be content to work up from the ranks.

"I started out on this expedition with great notions of making such a trip as no man had ever before attempted, passing up a branch of the Saskatchewan, making a portage with the assistance of the Crees or Chippewas to some convenient branch of the Athabasca River, and voyage on to the lake of that name by fall, winter there perhaps at the Hudson Bay Post, and in the spring by means of the chain of lakes and rivers that I understand connect the Athabasca Lake with Hudson Bay, arrive at that vast sheet of water in time to be picked up by some whaler and carried home a winner.

"Makes you smile I guess—well, it strikes me as funny, now that I've been navigating this country for several months, and only gotten this far; but when I laid out the trip it was a serious business for me, and I couldn't see anything but success ahead of me. I've had my fun, and I'm ready to call the game off. This is a man's work, I understand now, and I'm out of the exploring business for the time, only now that we're up so far Eli and myself want to see all we can of the country; and Eli has some notions in the line of discovering rich copper ledges that he means to work while wandering about this unknown land, eh, old man?"

In this boyish, familiar manner did he address his comrade, and Eli as usual laughed good-naturedly and nodded his head—evidently he had a fund of humor in his make-up that could not be disturbed by any amount of "joshing."

Cuthbert halted in his explanations; he did not hint at such a thing, but evidently it was up to Owen to tell something at least in connection with his presence in the neighborhood, and how he came to be rushing down the dangerous rapids at the time the storm broke, when it would appear the part of wisdom for one who knew the peril involved as well as he did, to land and portage around the troubled water.

The lad acted a little as though confused, not knowing just how much he should tell in connection with himself; but taking a brace he finally spoke up—Eli was adding some wood to the fire from a stock they had laid in dry when the storm was seen approaching, while Cuthbert busied himself in making his seat more comfortable, though in reality it was done in order not to appear to be noticing the coloring-up of the guest, about whom he seemed to realize that there was a bit of a mystery.

"I told you my name was Owen Dugdale, and that I had always lived up in this country. Well, that is hardly so, for when I was a little chap I remember being in Montreal with my parents for a spell; but they came

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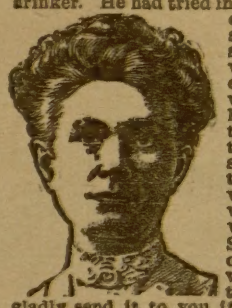

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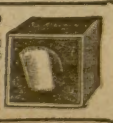

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This prescription comes from a physician who has made a special study of men and I am convinced it is the surest-acting combination for the cure of deficient manhood, and vigor failure ever put together.

I think I owe it to my fellow man to send them a copy in confidence so that any man anywhere who is weak and discouraged with repeated failures may stop drugging himself with harmful patent medicines, secure what I believe is the quickest-acting restorative, upbuilding, SPOT-TOUCHING remedy ever devised, and so cure himself at home quietly and quickly. Just drop me a line like this: Dr. A. E. Robinson, 3791 Luck Building, Detroit, Mich., and I will send you a copy of this splendid recipe in a plain ordinary envelope free of charge. A great many doctors would charge $3.00 to $5.00 for merely writing out a prescription like this—but I send it entirely free.

back here and I've never gone out of the woods since.

"My mother taught me all I know, for she was a lady, and had been educated in a convent school in that city. My father was used to the life of the woods, and I learned everything connected with that from him. I lost my mother two years ago, and my father later. That's about all there is in connection with me. I—I had some trouble up the river at the post, and was making my way down with the intention of leaving this country forever when this accident happened. I'm glad it did happen, because it's thrown me in with two such good fellows. You'll be surprised when I tell you that I've never had a boy friend in all my life; and—well, it's mighty fine to be sitting here and talking with you both. I wish I could do something to return the favor, that's what."

"You can—stay with us a while, and let us have some of the benefit of your knowledge of the country. We'd like nothing better; and if you have no other place to go, why make a third member of the crowd. You have a boat, and as for grub and such, why, we're loaded down with it. Don't decide just now, but think it over and tell us in the morning. We won't take no for an answer, remember."

Owen turned his head away as if to look at something he fancied moved along the edge of the camp; but it was to conceal the tears that came unbidden into his eyes—the genuine warmth of this invitation stirred his heart, and as some resolution sprang into life he gripped his hands and set his teeth hard.

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this story of strange and wild boyhood adventures. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

On and Off.

Comedian—And you had a strenuous time in the last town?

Tragedian—I should say so. The manager was in the wings egging me on and the audience was out in front egging me off.

He Won.

"If you persist," said Mrs. Abbott in conclusion of her remarks, "in wearing those awful overalls whenever you're at home, I'll get me some wrappers and a sunbonnet. I might as well."

"Those overalls," said Mr. Abbott, patting the greasy, dusty garments fondly, "cost me 60 cents, and they've saved me several pairs of pants already."

"But they do look so, so—disreputable," finished Mrs. Abbott weakly.

"Sure they do," said Mr. Abbott proudly; "they're appropriate; that's it—appropriate. I wouldn't any more think of wearing 'em to a reception than I'd think of putting on a prince albert to milk the cow." Mrs. Abbott sniffed.

"Why," resumed Mr. Abbott, "if old Buttercup saw me come out with a milk bucket and a prince alb——" But Mrs. Abbott had flounced into the house.

"I'll cure him," she said between her teeth. "The card club meets here tomorrow night and I'll lock up all his clothes. I'll—do—just—that—very—thing!"

That evening Mr. Abbott went out to milk, and clean up the yard. He did not wear a prince albert. An hour later Mrs. Abbott called him.

"They're all here," she said, "waiting on you—hurry and dress." Mr. Abbott grinned. He pitched an armload of hay to the cow, dusted his hands on the seat of the criticised overalls and slowly entered the house.

Ten minutes later he went into the library where the guests were assembled. Mrs. Abbott gasped. He wore a nicely pressed gray suit she remembered he had sent to the tailor the week before. When the party broke up and Mr. Abbott had locked the door, Mrs. Abbott turned on him.

"How in the world," she said, "did you change your clothes so quickly, I——"

"Pulled off my overalls," said Mr. Abbott. "How did you suppose, and what did you suppose I had on overalls for, anyway?"

Just an Experiment.

They had taken advantage of the fact that it was little Richard's first visit to the country and filled his childish ears with some ancient chestnuts. With solemn faces they told him when they wanted apple butter they fed the cows apples, and when they wanted peanut butter they dieted her on peanuts. Richard heard all, but made no comment. Some mornings later they found him heading for the barnyard with a coal-oil can.

"Gracious, Richard!" asked the mother, anxiously, "what in the world are you going to do with that?"

"Why, ma," he responded, innocently, "I was going to give the old cow some kerosene so she could furnish some of that petroleum butter pa talks about."

The Mysterious Cousin.

(Continued from page three.)

your informant mention any name in this connection?"

"He said a man was suspected and that he hoped to see him in the clutches of the law within a very short time."

"Yet he did not mention a name?"

"He did not."

For an hour the maid and man lingered in the grove of maples. A carriage driven to the gate, broke up the tete-a-tete.

Lettice hastened to the house, while Gregerson turned to encounter a man just dismounting from his carriage—a thin, stoop-shouldered man with iron-gray hair and piercing, steel-blue eyes. The two nodded in passing.

Gregerson turned and looked back as the old man hastened up the stpes of the Lake mansion. The new arrival was Timothy Huddlestone, the miserly money-lender of Washtanong Village.

The continuation of this highly entertaining story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year; it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscription, for many great stories that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming months.

Caring for the Voice.

Next in importance to the development of a good singing voice is learning the best method of preserving it. There is nothing that will spoil it or wear it out quicker than use which by being excessive becomes abuse. Twice a week, or three times at most, if the singer be in perfect health, is quite as often as one should sing in opera if she desires to long retain the pristine freshness, sweetness and power of her voice.

Nervousness, worry, and trouble are great foes to the singing voice. The professional singer should, therefore, have an abundance of sleep. She necessarily retires late, and must, therefore, rise late. Insufficient sleep will soon injure the nervous system, and through it the voice.

Alcoholic stimulants of all kinds tend to irritate the throat, and should be entirely abstained from. Even light wines are no exception to this rule. Most people are familiar with the hoarse voice of the steady drinker, and it is often said of such an individual that he has burned his throat out with drink. Even a moderate use of alcohol may, therefore, tend to make the voice husky.

Walking is the best exercise for a singer. Moderate billiard playing may also be good, principally because it involves a great deal of walking about the table. Some anatomist has said that the billiard cue is the only thing that brings every muscle of the body into play.

There is a little opening through which each ear receives sound. Physicians tells us that there is a direct connection known as the Eustachian tube, between the ear and the throat, and cold air entering the ear may thus readily affect the larynx. To prevent this it is well for a singer to keep her ears stuffed with small pieces of cotton when out of doors in cold weather.

A Different Case.

Judge Giles Baker of a Pennsylvania county was likewise cashier of his home bank. A man presented a check one day for payment. He was a stranger. His evidence of identification was not satisfactory to the cashier.

"Why, judge," said the man, "I've known you to sentence men to be hanged on no better evidence than this!"

"Very likely," replied the judge. "But when it comes to letting go of cold cash we have to be mighty careful."

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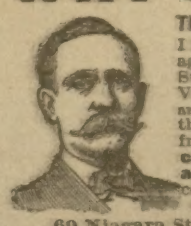

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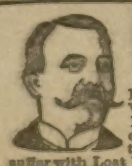

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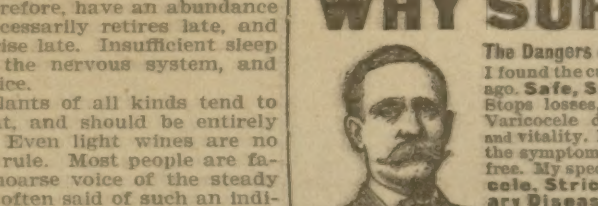

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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

The Cotton King.

Cotton is called the King of the Southern States, because it is so important an item in the business of that section of the country. American cotton constitutes the great part of the world's supply. In India and China the plant has been cultivated for ages, and history points to India as the first seat of manufacture. The people had a gin to separate the seed from the fiber, also a clumsy wheel, the forerunner of the wheels our great grandmothers used.

The soil of a cotton country is prepared for the reception of seed by plowing in the winter months. The sowing takes place in March, April and May, according to countries and localities. Great care must be taken to avoid the exposure of the young plants to the late frosts, which are fatal. It is necessary sometimes to replant the whole field. Great care and labor are required in the fields until the picking season, which commences in the latter part of July and lasts until the frost kills the plant.

The picking season is a busy time on a cotton plantation. Everybody turns out—men, women and children, even the toddling tots—for the quality of the crop depends on its being quickly gathered after the bolls have opened. Should it be left on the plant long after opening, it is liable to be injured by the heat of the sun, which over-dries it; or by the rains, which stain it; or by the winds, which load it with sand or dust and dirt.

Each picker is provided with a bag tied around his body, and a large basket which he leaves at the end of the section allotted to him. He puts the cotton in his bag as fast as he picks it. When he reaches the end of his section he empties the contents of his bag into the basket, and starts again. Picking requires expertness and skill; the picker has to seize with the first effort the whole of the cotton of each boll, taking care to bring it out quite free. The average amount picked by each laborer is about a hundred pounds a day, though many go over that amount.

It seems strange that, up to the present time, no machine has been invented for gathering the crop. Several attempts have been made, but have proved unsuccessful. The Southern cotton fields present a quaint and pretty picture of the pickers, old and young, bending from morning till night over their work, the midsummer air stirring softly in a crooning accompaniment to their toil.

BIG BEAUTY DOLL

DOLLY has beautiful sleeping eyes, (open and close automatically) movable bisque head, jointed body, curly hair, pretty white teeth, big fancy picture hat, lace trimmed underwear, slippers, stockings, etc.

Completely dressed from hat to slippers. A big and handsome doll beauty that will delight and please all the girls.

This lovely Big Sleeping Beauty Doll is nearly two feet tall and is given away to any girl for disposing of only **ten boxes Grandma's Healing and Complexion Cream at twenty-five cents a box.** A grand toilet preparation for all skin trouble, Eczema, Pimples, Blackheads, Salt Rheum, Sore Eyes, Burns, Scalds, Chafing, Insect Stings, Chapped Hands, Tan, Freckles, Etc. A reliable and standard toilet article that sells on its own merits. **Girls,** send us your full name and address, plainly written, and we will mail you, postpaid, the ten boxes Cream. When sold, remit us the money, (two dollars and fifty cents) and we will promptly forward to your address, carefully packed, this Handsome Big Beauty Sleeping Doll, nearly two feet tall.

Write us at once for the ten boxes Cream and premium list. We trust you. Address,

THOMPSON'S CHEMICAL WORKS
No. 204 Premium Doll Department
BRIDGEWATER, CONN.

"Beauty's" Chain.

That Beauty had his faults there is no denying, but what dog has no faults? Why, the writer has even heard of boys and girls who were not quite perfect. And it must be admitted Beauty had great provocation, for the grocer's boy, out of whom he took a bite, was certainly fat and tempting. Had he been old and tough, Beauty likely would have let him alone, so perhaps it was as much the boy's fault as the dog's. Then, again, why should he be blamed for killing Mr. Brown's rooster, a conceited stuck-up bird who was always reminding one that it was time to get up when one wanted to turn over and take another nap? The fight with the dog who lived over the way was about a nice juicy bone, which belonged to the dog, but which Beauty wanted, and if, as some people think, "might makes right." Beauty easily proved himself to be right. As for worrying all the cats in the neighborhood, why, what are cats made for except to be worried? Poor, useless creatures, who enjoy lying asleep by the fire and are afraid to go into the water, and who catch poor little mice, who never did them any harm! Nevertheless, the neighbors did not like Beauty, and told his master that if he did not keep him at home they would shoot him, and that is how the dear, sweet dog came to be chained up.

This he thought most unjust, but he could not help himself, and as he lay by his kennel thinking what a cruel, heartless world he lived in, the cat from next door appeared on the top of the fence and looked down at him. Beauty, of course, growled, and made a spring to get at her, but the chain held him back and his collar nearly choked him, and the cat, with a smile, said, "Good morning, Mr. Beauty, what a beautiful new chain you have got. I think I will come down and have a nearer look at it," and that cat actually had the impudence to jump into the yard and quietly sit down just out of his reach.

Beauty's feelings can be imagined. A poor, miserable cat to come into his yard and sit down without even being asked! He barked and growled, and strained at his collar until quite exhausted, but the cat quietly looking at him said, "It certainly is a beautiful chain, Mr. Beauty, and you ought to be proud of it."

"Just wait until I get at you," growled Beauty. "I'll make mince meat of you, and I'll grind you to powder!"

"Then why don't you do it?" said the cat. "Here I am. Come on. Are you not feeling well, or can it be, Mr. Beauty, that you are a 'fraid cat?'"

At being called a "fraid cat" Beauty's fury knew no bounds, and making one spring, he broke his chain and went for that cat.

The cat, however, proved too quick for him, and was up a tree in an instant, while Beauty tried his best to climb after her, but could not manage it, so after raging for a while he lay down, saying, "Never mind, you'll have to come down some time, and I'll get you if I have to stay here a million years!"

But he did not stay quite so long, for soon his master came, and seeing him, said, "Why, that rascal has broken his chain. I must get a stronger one!"

So poor Beauty was chained up again, and the cat used to come every morning and sit on the fence and called him a "fraid cat," but she never ventured into the yard again.

A Pencil Full of Dogs.

Polly was drawing "pictures" on the slate for 3-year-old Ralph.

"Look at this dog, Ralph," she said. Isn't it nice? I drew it out of my own head!"

"No," answered Ralph, solemnly. "It came right out of the pencil. I saw it come."

Then he added, thoughtfully, "There's lots of dogs in the pencil, but I don't know how they got there!"

Examination Answers.

Name two kinds of nuts? Peanuts and forget-me-nuts.

From what animals do we get milk? The camel and the milkman.

What is the hen covered with? Feathers.

What is the dog covered with? Fleas.

Name the most ferocious animal known in the United States? Mosquito.

MY NOVEL HOUSE PARTY.

I asked some friends to stay with me,
And said I'd truly try
To think up new and pleasant things
To make the days go by.

I took them in a motor car
Which I had taught to jump;
For exercise I let them work
The handle of my pump.

I took them to the tennis court
With rackets, net and all,
Except that I did not provide
The little tennis ball.

I taught them how to play as if
The ball were really there,
And every now and then to wave
Their rackets in the air.

"No trite amusement here!" I said,
"I've always something new,
I pass my time in thinking up
These pleasant things for you."

I made a pie of pickled pins,
I made a cake of stone,
I made a soup of ink and glue—
And now I'm all alone!

Out of the Mouths of Babes.

Mamma—What can I do to induce you to go to bed, dear?

Nettie (aged 5)—You can let me sit up another hour.

—

Lola, aged 6, was going to the country to spend a week, and after finishing her evening prayer before starting she added: Yesterday, when I was out
week, and I wish you would keep your eye on papa and mamma."

—

"Now, Tommy," said the Sunday school school teacher, "what does it mean in the prayer where it says, 'Lead us not into temptation;'"

"I guess it means the Lord needn't bother us, because we can get in ourselves without being led!" answered Tommy.

—

Small Bobby—Papa, why can a man run faster than a boy?

Papa—Because he is bigger, my boy.

Small Bobby (after pondering for a few moments)—Well, if that's the reason, why don't the hind wheels of a wagon run faster than the front wheels?

—

"Johnny," said his small sister, "won't you give me half of your apple?"

"I'm sorry, sir," replied Johnny, "but I can't do it. Mamma told me the other day never to do anything by halves."

—

"Goodness gracious, child!" exclaimed grandma, "what under the sun are you doing with that watering pot in here?"

"Why, grandma," replied the little miss, "I'm watering the flowers on mamma's bonnet. They look so awfully dry."

—

Gentleman—I say, my little man, can you tell me if there is any one living here with one eye named Walker?"

Boy—I don't know, sir. What was the name of his other eye?"

Why She Exaggerated.

Dorothy stuttered dreadfully, and some words seemed exceptionally hard to force from her mouth. At home, when there was no one there but the family, she was able to speak with little difficulty, and only stuttered once in a while. But the minute any company came, or she went out anywhere in the presence of strangers, the poor child grew nervous and became so embarrassed that it was almost impossible for her to say anything. The letter "t" was particularly hard for her.

One day a little friend invited Dorothy to pass the day at her house, and in the morning they walked two miles. At the lunch table Nellie's mother said:

"Well, children, did you have a pleasant time this morning?"

"Oh, yes," answered Nellie, "we did have a lovely time. We took a long, long walk."

"Did you?" said Mrs. Smith. "And how far did you walk, Dorothy?"

There was a little pause, and then for some unknown reason Dorothy blushed scarlet, and said, "Four miles, Mrs. Smith."

Nellie's eyes grew round with amazement. "Why, Dorothy," she exclaimed, "what are you talking about? You know we only walked two!"

"I know it," answered Dorothy miserably, "but I felt the stutter coming and I couldn't have said it to save my life; and four isn't half so hard when you're going to stutter!"

TEDDY, TERRY AND TOMMY.

TEDDY.

When I grow up I think I'll be
A soldier, strong and brave;
With all my might I'll fight for right,
That none may be a slave.

TERRY.

When I grow up I think I'll be
A sailor bold and true;
I'll learn the sea from A to Z,
And own a ship and crew.

TOMMY.

When I grow up I think I'll be—
Oh, dear, I've made no plan!
Well, anyway, I guess I'll say
I'll simply be a man.

The Cat Came Down.

In the suburbs of Raleigh, N. C., a cat climbed a tree and became frightened and would not descend again. A boy went up to bring her down and fell and broke an arm. A second boy then went up, and he fell and broke a leg. A third tried it on and fell and broke three ribs. Then the cat came down and ran away.